PPS FOR PROFESSIONALS
SINCE 1941

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THE PROFESSIONAL

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IN THIS ISSUE

LIFESTYLE

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Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of *The Professional*, where we delve into a diverse range of topics that inspire and empower individuals both personally and professionally. In this issue, we bring you a collection of captivating articles that will ignite your imagination, stimulate your aspirations and guide you on a journey towards greatness.

In our first highlight, our Group CEO Izak Smit takes to the high seas to contemplate what inspiration is all about in his article *Sailing the seas of success: How inspiration charts the course* on page 8.

Then, our regular contributor, Louis Fourie, founding partner of the *Regarding my Life* programme, explores the effectiveness of traditional management approaches based on rewards and punishments in motivating knowledge workers on page 13.

On page 15, Roy McMurchie, Head of Fiduciary Services at PPS Insurance, explains how strategic estate planning can unlock the potential for your child's future success, ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder their dreams. This article sheds light on the importance of laying a solid foundation to support their aspirations, even after you are gone.

In our regular profile feature (page 18), we talk to PPS's Liz Strydom who has been working for the company for 45 years. She is an inspiration for many PPS employees and offers valuable advice to youngsters who are starting their careers.

Have you ever heard of Ikigai? Whether you have or not, Linda Sherlock, Executive Head of PPS Wealth Advisory, explains on page 20 what it is and how it can guide us towards a life of meaning and happiness – also in terms of financial planning.

Walt Disney, the man, needs no introduction. His business empire is now, almost 60 years after his passing, probably one of the best known in the world. That said, Disney faced many challenges and setbacks as a young entrepreneur. In the article *What a lost 'lucky rabbit' can teach businesses about insurance* on page 22, we look at his experience and ponder what would have happened if he had business assurance in those early days.

For medical practitioners, we shed light on the importance of indemnity insurance in our article *From hurdles to success, how indemnity insurance can protect South Africa's medical practitioners* on page 24. Delve into the challenges healthcare professionals face and how indemnity insurance can safeguard their careers, ensuring they can focus on delivering the best possible care to their patients.

Testimonials hold a special place in our hearts. We share Liane, one of our member's stories, on page 26. This gripping narrative demonstrates the transformative power of insurance in restoring lives and rebuilding futures.

The saying goes that summer bodies are made in winter. Do you need a bit of inspiration to get moving again? Then, the article on page 43 by Warren Flood, a movement and mindset coach involved in our regular Healthy Weigh Challenges, should get you motivated and moving.

In our regular features, you will find recipes that will bring warmth to the cold winter months (page 34), inspirational places in South Africa to visit (page 36), our book review (page 38) and our PRO-Quiz (page 46).

We hope this edition of *The Professional* serves as a catalyst for inspiration and personal growth. May it guide you on a transformative journey towards success, happiness and a life well-lived. Embrace the wisdom within these pages and let your aspirations soar to new heights.

Enjoy the read!

Elvira

Editor

Elvira Wood is the editor and writer at PPS. She holds a PhD in Communication Studies from North West University and has previously worked as a financial journalist for some of South Africa's leading daily newspapers.

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PPS **2022** claims statistics

All health and life risk claims (excluding short-term insurance and Profit-Share payouts): **R3.35 billion**

Claims per benefit

DOWN 5% from 2021 **R1 044.4 million** Sickness benefit	**UP 7%** from 2021 **R749.9 million** Permanent Incapacity benefit	
DOWN 48% from 2021 **R956.8 million** Life Cover	**UP 10%** from 2021 **R416.5 million** Critical Illness Cover	**DOWN 22%** from 2021 **R186.7 million** Lump-sum Disability benefit

Proportion of claims **by profession**

- 26% Paramedical*
- 18% Medical doctor
- 12% Legal
- 10% Financial
- 7% Engineering
- 6% Dental
- 5% Accountant
- 4% Consultant
- 12% Other

* Includes physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, etc., excluding medical and dental doctors

Breakdown **of total claims paid**

Gender split of overall claims: 29% Females, 71% Males

- **20 397** Number of claims processed
- **95** Number of claims processed per day
- **R14 million** Average paid per working day

FROM THE CEO'S DESK

Dear reader, PPS will soon have business operations in five countries: three in Africa and two in Australasia.

PPS has been operating in Namibia for decades. Before independence in 1990, Namibia (or the then South West Africa) was often considered a fifth province of the then four-province South Africa. It was, therefore, natural for PPS (and many other financial institutions in South Africa) to also have operations in that beautiful part of the world. After independence, Namibia slowly weaned itself from South Africa in many ways.

In the past, we at PPS often thought of our operations in Namibia as merely an extension of South Africa. But today, we have a different mindset: Namibia is independent. The more than 5 000 PPS members in Namibia have their own profit pool and have enjoyed significant additions to their PPS Profit-Share Accounts™ over the last few years. Seeing PPS Namibia grow under a very capable board and management team is pleasing.

The third country in Africa where we are - as of this month (July) - operational is Botswana. Our PPS Healthcare Administration business will take over the administration services of the Botswana government's medical fund. We are excited to serve the tens of thousands of Botswana members in this fund with the same quality service that the members of our South African clients enjoy.

Then, for almost seven years now, PPS Mutual has been writing life insurance business in Australia. We are close to a significant milestone there: the 10 000th member is about to join our associate business Down Under. PPS Mutual has also recently been voted by the independent advisers in Australia as the best retail life office in that market. We were top three in many other categories, including number one in the very important product category. After an initial tough start, PPS Mutual is fast becoming a success story. It is not a subsidiary of South Africa but stands on its own with its own profit pool.

PPS South Africa provides certain back-office services to Australia, from which our South African members earn an income. There is also a royalty stream to PPS South Africa, as a founder of this business. We expect this royalty stream to become significant in future.

Because of our success in Australia, we have recently started to build a business "next door" in New Zealand as well.

We expect that PPS New Zealand will be in the market in 2024. The model will be very similar to that used in Australia. It will be an associate business (not a subsidiary) for New Zealand members, run by a New Zealand team and with its own Profit-Share pool. Similarly, South African members will benefit from a service and royalty income stream.

The theme for this edition of *The Professional* is inspiration.

I mention New Zealand when I share some thoughts on this theme on page 8. Returning from Australia and New Zealand the other day, I was again inspired by the possibilities of our great mutual model. It does not have to stay with five countries. South Africa is indeed exporting mutuality to the world!

May you again find this edition enjoyable, educational and value-adding.

Regards,

Izak

PPS Group Executive

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Regards, Izak

PPS Group Executive

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Spotlight

Sailing the seas of success

How inspiration charts the course

By Izak Smit, PPS Group CEO

In pursuing success, inspiration is the elusive elixir that fuels our endeavours and propels us towards greatness. It is the intangible force igniting our passion, fuelling our determination and moulding our actions into impactful results. Without inspiration, even the most skilled individuals can find themselves adrift in a sea of mediocrity.

In the previous edition of *The Professional*, we pondered the topic of **success**.

In my article *Redefining the definition of success*, I wrote that when we find purpose in our professional endeavours, a medical doctor's healing will be wider than the immediate symptom, an engineer's design will unlock efficiencies beyond the problem to be solved, a business leader's impact will be further than the company's bottom line, a teacher's lessons will not be limited to the classroom.

If our hearts are not invested in what we pursue, irrespective of skill, the ultimate results will eventually reveal this lack of inspiration.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the verb "inspire" as "to give someone the desire, confidence or enthusiasm to do something well". When someone encounters something, it is that spark or trigger that stirs a desire to create or achieve something special.

A closer look at the word shows that it is constructed of two words: "in" and "spire". "In" is, of course, to enter, and "spire" comes from the word spirit, which has life, power, fire, force, enthusiasm and energy as synonyms. Hence, when we get inspired, it means, in essence, that a power, energy, a spirit or enthusiasm enters us, resulting in a strong urge or motivation.

It is essential to remind ourselves that inspiration, that initial spark or trigger alone, is not enough. When Thomas Edison was asked about his genius and success, he replied: "Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration". Well done is better than well dreamt. Faith, or an idea, without work, is dead. If you are lazy, it is perhaps better not to be inspired because those who do not dream about what is possible will not suffer the despair of non-accomplishment.

As we delve deeper into the **relationship between inspiration and success**, I would like to connect this topic to a sports event I was reminded of during my recent business travels to Australia and New Zealand. During my travels, I visited the New Zealand Maritime Museum, where the story of the America's Cup again fascinated (and inspired!) me.

The America's Cup is the oldest continuously contested international sporting competition globally. The Cup, informally known as the Auld Mug, is a trophy in sailing. Queen Victoria awarded it in 1851 to John Stevens, owner of the schooner *America*, for a crushing victory against a fleet of sixteen other racing boats, the best England had to offer. Six years later, Stevens donated the trophy to the New York Yacht Club (NYYC), and required that it be made available for perpetual international competition among countries.

Since then, the names of winning yachts have all been inscribed, but the trophy itself remains nameless. It is an irony of history that countless billions of dollars have been spent over the **years in pursuit of an unnamed cup**. But it is a trophy that has become a symbol of national pride ever since.

The America's Cup is a match race, one against one, sailing's equivalent of a boxing match.

First, the challenger teams must battle each other to determine which team has earned the right to take on the defender in the America's Cup.

The NYYC kept winning for 132 years, the longest winning record in international sporting history, cementing the myth that the cup belonged to the US. It was bolted in place during much of this time, with **no thought of it ever being lost**. The cup's history is marked by the successes and failures of some of the world's wealthiest people: Vanderbilt, Rockefeller, Turner, Bond, Bertarelli ... digging into their deep pockets to defend national pride.

Finally, in 1983, after three previous unsuccessful challenges, Australian businessman Alan Bond succeeded when he returned for a fourth time, complete with a golden spanner to unbolt the cup from its plinth.

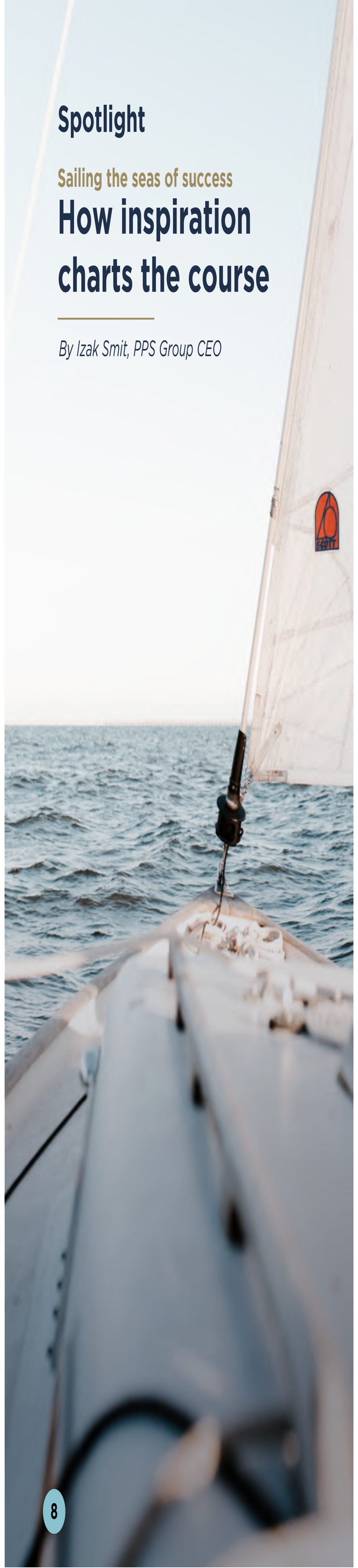
Dennis Connor achieved lifelong notoriety as the first American skipper to lose the cup. He vowed to get it back, and, in 1987, he recovered his nation's honour.

This was the time that Team New Zealand started to become **a serious challenger**. After narrow losses in the challenger series in 1987 and 1992, they finally removed the Auld Mug to Auckland after a brilliant 1995 campaign. They also became the first non-American team to defend the cup in 2000 successfully. After losing it in 2003, they again won it in 2017 and successfully retained it in 2021, hence being the current America's Cup champions.

The America's Cup is among the world's most watched sporting spectacles, right up there with the Tour de France, Olympic Games and various sporting code World Cups.

This is a sport where campaigns can cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Years of preparation are required (these days, there are three to four years between contests).

So, how did New Zealand, a small Pacific Island nation with a population less than that of Johannesburg, take on the technological and financial might of syndicates from the world's wealthiest and most technologically advanced countries and often win so perfectly?



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It is a beautiful story of teamwork, leadership, peak performance and ... inspiration! Because winning at this level requires a whole nation to be inspired. And **victory, in turn, inspires a nation**.

Space does not allow me to go into the detail of the effort and grit, over many years, that is required for success. It is immense. It requires designers, engineers, boat builders, sail makers, fitness experts, weather experts, computer programmers, financiers, marketing and public relationship teams, security staff, psychologists, lawyers, managers and sailors - the list is long - to work together towards one goal.

It is a sport that requires participants to be away from their families for long stretches. It is also a dangerous sport. Over the years, lives have been lost (e.g., when equipment explodes under the immense tension of competitive racing at an extreme level).

> **"Without inspirational leadership, the whole project would be futile."**

The leader of New Zealand's successful 1995 and 2000 America's Cup campaigns, Sir Peter Blake, will be remembered for some memorable quotes. Perhaps his most famous is: "If it was going to be easy, it would not be worth trying." He also said: "We have taken on the rest of the world at the hardest game available - the America's Cup - and won. All that I could ask for was that everyone could put their hands on their hearts at the end and say: I have given everything there was to give, I could not give anything more." That is the stuff that stirs and inspires a nation!

In closing, something from another famous New Zealander, Sir Edmund Hillary. He once wrote: "At some stage in our lives, many of us are filled with an inspirational dream to achieve something that we know will stretch our abilities to the utmost. But all too often, sadly, the dream fades and we revert to being very normal human beings."

He added: "I have often been asked: When you have spent some years of your life devoted to achieving some great objective and finally succeed - is there a sense of anti-climax and emptiness? Although a person of modest abilities, I have never experienced this problem because I always had many other adventures churning in my mind to carry on next. I remember standing at the top of Mount Everest, having reached the top of the world in every sense of the term and looking east to the unclimbed summit of Makalu ... Real success is a continuing process of finding new inspiration."

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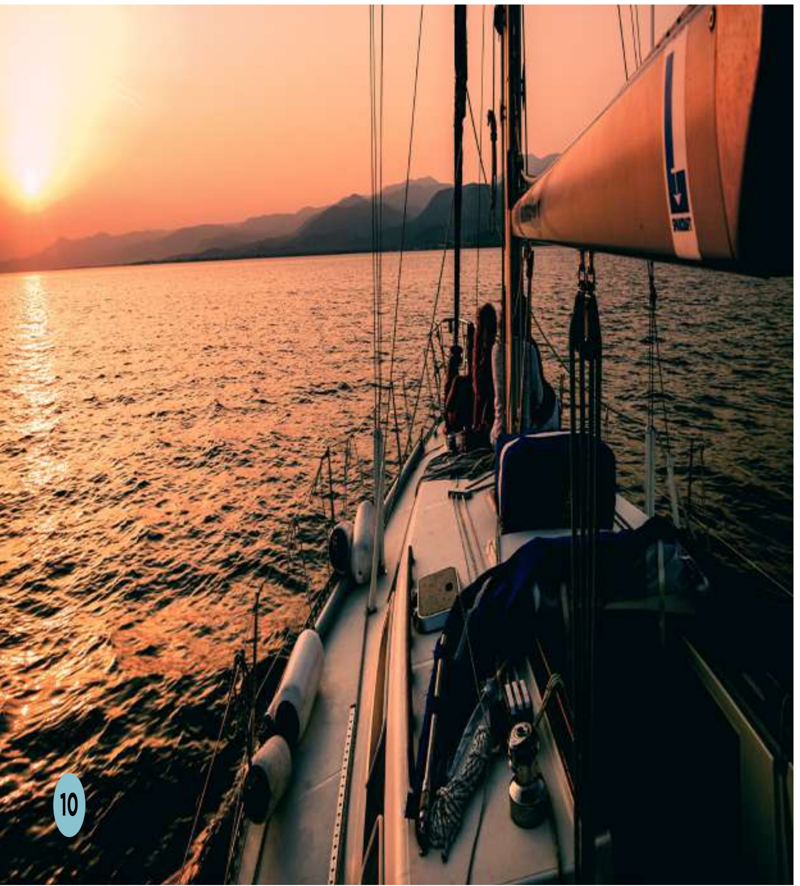
May we continue to find inspiration as we pursue our professional challenges and other endeavours.



The Big Think

Beyond profit

The growing importance of social considerations in investment decision-making

By David Crosoer, Chief Investments Officer at PPS Investments

The debate about whether asset managers and corporates, more generally, should explicitly take "social issues" into account in terms of their investment decision-making is not without controversy.

I strongly believe in tackling our society's challenges. Like many South Africans, I am deeply sceptical about the state's current ability to do much about these challenges.

Despite my reservations about the incentive structures that currently exist within the asset-management industry and private sector, which pose challenges in effectively addressing pressing social issues, I am enthusiastic about the **transformative potential of the corporate sector**. Within this context, I believe the corporate sector can adopt a purpose-driven approach and assume an empowering role in tackling these challenges.

Many of the pressing issues facing our society today are linked to the state's inability to regulate the private sector adequately to prevent it from over-supplying goods with negative externalities (e.g., tobacco, alcohol or carbon emissions) or the state's inability to produce public goods with positive externalities (e.g., education, electricity, safety).

Many of these public goods are social, where the benefit of providing it is shared more broadly than the individual who directly benefits from it or would be willing to pay for it. Here the incentive for the private sector is to structurally undersupply the public good, no matter the legislative pressure. Similarly, unless government imposes societal costs on private companies so supply negative externality goods, the private sector will oversupply them.

At its most basic level, then, the private sector responds to the price mechanism. Often, the price mechanism fails to adequately price the true cost/benefit of the good provided, and consequently, the private sector will either over- or under-supply the good. Notably, the private company that pollutes the environment because it does not bear the full social cost, or the one that only provides education to the marginal benefit of the individual user, is not a bad company or a company that has not fully integrated environmental, social and governance (ESG) into its decision-making, but rather a company that is appropriately responding to the price signal. Likewise, asset managers are incentivised to respond to the price mechanism. No matter how much we wish it, and no matter

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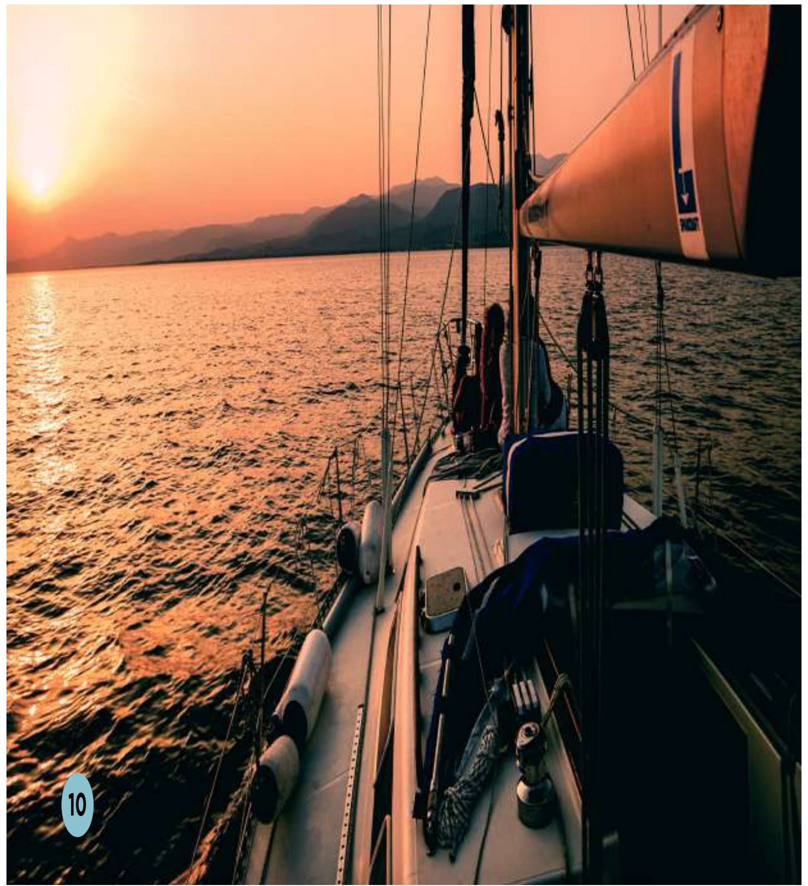

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At its most basic level, then, the private sector responds to the price mechanism. Often, the price mechanism fails to adequately price the true cost/benefit of the good provided, and consequently, the private sector will either over- or under-supply the good. Notably, the private company that pollutes the environment because it does not bear the full social cost, or the one that only provides education to the marginal benefit of the individual user, is not a bad company or a company that has not fully integrated environmental, social and governance (ESG) into its decision-making, but rather a company that is appropriately responding to the price signal. Likewise, asset managers are incentivised to respond to the price mechanism. No matter how much we wish it, and no matter

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how much they say they embed ESG factors into their decision-making, asset managers are not paid to invest in something beyond its marginal (private) benefit or paid to take costs into account that are not captured by the (mis)functioning price mechanism.

The price mechanism can be likened to Darwin's theory of natural selection. It functions in a similar manner by **favouring what is most efficient and effective** in the current market. There is no long-term planning embedded in natural selection and (partly) because of that, it is unsurprising that most organisms that have ever existed are now extinct - they over-optimise for current conditions and then fail when conditions change.

Could this change?

Most externalities only exist over short-term horizons. The longer the individual's time horizon, the more likely they will place a similar value on public goods as a society, and the more likely they will consider the negative societal implications of their own behaviour.

Do you, by your own behaviour, **consider the impact you will have on future generations**, or do you instead focus on your own immediate interest? Unfortunately, most of us will probably admit to the latter.

Organisations like PPS, which operate on the ethos of mutuality, exist to serve both their present and future members. By implication, these organisations have a much longer time horizon than a typical private company (and many individuals) and need not respond predominately to the shorter-term price mechanism. Such organisations should be better at building robustness and dealing with both positive and negative externalities and increasingly will be at the forefront of driving a more sustainable agenda.

The state's failure in its essential support to society is highly problematic in building a just and equitable society. However, organisations like PPS can **play an essential and enabling role**. We are engaging with other companies from around the world where mutuality forms the core of their existence, to learn how they support the communities they operate in.

As we navigate the complex terrain of investment decision-making, it becomes evident that including social considerations is a topic of considerable debate. By embracing a purpose-driven approach, corporations can actively contribute to addressing pressing social issues. Together with other like-minded companies across the globe, we are committed to learning from each other's experiences and supporting the communities we serve.

Click here to learn more about PPS Investments.

Underestimated inspiration

In a world where management strategies are evolving, traditional philosophies are being put to the test. Louis Fourie, founding partner of the *Regarding my Life Programme*, takes a closer look at the untapped potential of motivating and engaging teams beyond the confines of incentives and penalties.

Current and future professional individuals shoulder the responsibility of managing people. It is within their domain to guide and unite diverse groups towards achieving desired outcomes most effectively. As managers, they face the primary challenge of consistently motivating, engaging and energising their teams.

Traditional management philosophy rests on a simple proposition: People respond positively to incentives and will do their utmost to avoid penalties. According to this notion, all one needs to do is design a reward system **encouraging desired behaviour** while implementing punitive measures to discourage conduct one disapproves of.

Over time, elaborate systems of reward and punishment, known as "carrot and stick", have been developed to drive "push-and-pull" engines of control. These practices have even found their way into education systems and parenting styles.

Undoubtedly, this approach has its merits in specific contexts. It suits scenarios where tasks resemble a horse pulling a cart, a hunter-gatherer pursuing prey while evading predators, or a labourer performing basic work on a factory floor.

However, **a new debate has emerged** in the past couple of decades. This discussion questions the effectiveness of "extrinsic" motivators in truly unleashing the potential of knowledge workers. Managers have increasingly recognised the significance of intrinsic factors that promote excellence, transcending the influence of bonuses, promises of organisational status and disciplinary fears or threats.

While this debate continues, two prevailing opinions warrant consideration for professional managers.

Firstly, it appears that individuals exhibit heightened enthusiasm and productivity when granted a certain degree of self-direction rather than being confined to rigid workplace compliance. In other words, when they are clear about the tasks at hand and the expected quality of work but are given ample discretion regarding how, when and where they complete these tasks.

To implement this model successfully, management must prioritise clarifying desired outcomes instead of merely providing instructions and overseeing inputs.

> **"It is essential to foster an environment enabling individuals to deliver their best work in their preferred manner."**

Moreover, managers should shift their management style from one of command and control to an expectation of professional

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maturity from everyone, replacing a culture of excessive supervision with one built on trust.

The impact of autonomy on task attitudes and individual performance is becoming increasingly evident. Some studies even demonstrate that people are willing to accept a pay reduction in exchange for greater professional spaciousness. The COVID-19 period and subsequent workplace discussions testify to the fervent plea of professionals to be given sufficient freedom to excel in their work. Before the pandemic, many competent yet frustrated individuals struggled to identify the source of their dissatisfaction. The crisis highlighted the importance of decision latitude in contributing meaningful value.

Many individuals exert more effort in their work than in pre-COVID-19 times, but they do so willingly in **exchange for a greater sense of ownership** over their daily choices.

The second idea gaining momentum in intrinsic motivation is that individuals **unleash their best selves** when their work serves a higher purpose. Researchers remind us that the most deeply motivated, satisfied and productive individuals are those who align their desires with a cause larger than themselves.

These individuals have an innate answer to the question: What am I really engaged in beyond the immediate task or profit motive? This concept of accomplishment, wherein a person leaves a meaningful legacy through their work, transcends generational boundaries. Purpose-seekers encompass individuals of all age groups. It is increasingly apparent that more money and material possessions are no longer the primary compensation choices for many talented individuals. The COVID-19 pandemic likely influenced this shift as well, bringing words like "greater good", "inclusivity", and "significance" to the forefront.

There exists a yearning for soul-stirring ideals and virtuous values.

> **"More and more people seek inspiration that resonates with their hearts, surpassing the gratification of material rewards."**

One should ask oneself: "Have I enlisted the power of sufficient autonomy and the energy of purpose maximisation in my life? Am I skilfully implementing these principles in my business endeavours? Do I fully appreciate how these forces - greater autonomy and an inspiring purpose - can work wonders within my sphere of influence?

The bottom line: One should consider whether there are ways one can reduce reliance on external incentives and penalties in favour of fostering self-governance and lasting motivation.

Louis Fourie

Empowering your child's dreams

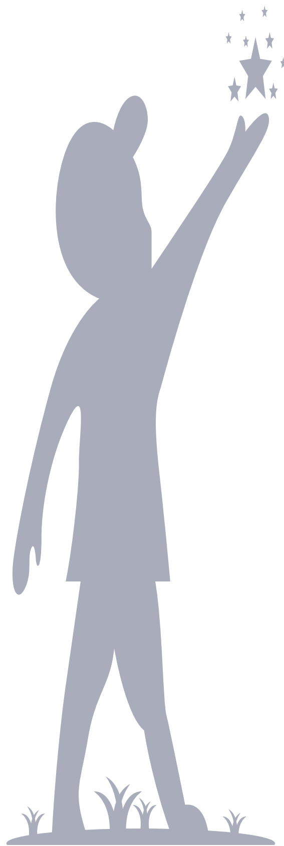
Unlocking success through strategic estate planning

By Roy McMurchie, Head of Fiduciary Services at PPS Insurance

As a parent, one of the most important things you can do is to inspire your children to follow their dreams and support them in achieving their goals. However, life is unpredictable, and one may not always be around to provide guidance and support. This is why it is crucial to plan ahead and ensure that even after death, your children's dreams can become a reality.

Identify your child's dreams

The first step in inspiring your child to make their dreams a reality is to **identify what those dreams are.** Every child has unique talents and interests, and it is essential to understand what they want to achieve in life. Talk to your child and encourage them to share their aspirations with you. Listen carefully and try to understand their passions and goals, even if they are unsure about it.



Asking a child about their dreams can reveal what they might be interested in doing as an adult and strengthen the bond between parent and child. It shows that parents are interested in their child's thoughts and aspirations and value their child's opinions and ideas. This creates a positive and open communication channel between parent and child, fostering trust and connection.

It can also introduce a child to goal-setting and motivation and instil a sense of purpose, drive and motivation.

Once you know your child's dreams, you can start planning **how to make them a reality.** This may involve financial planning, as well as finding the right mentors and support systems.

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Creating a Will

Creating a Will is one of the most crucial steps in ensuring that your child's dreams become a reality. In South Africa, a Will must be drafted in writing and signed by the testator and two witnesses of 16 years or older who are not beneficiaries.

When drafting a Will, it is important to consider how your child's assets will be managed after your death. Here are some considerations:

Funding for education expenses: You can include provisions in your Will to allocate funds specifically for your child's education and related expenses. This can be done through a Trust or by designating a specific portion of your estate to be used for educational purposes. You can specify the types of education expenses for which funds can be used, such as tuition, books, fees and other associated costs.

Education Trusts: Consider setting up an Education Trust as part of your Will. An Education Trust is a type of Trust that is specifically created to provide for a child's educational needs. It can be structured to provide for a child's educational expenses at various academic career stages, such as primary and secondary school or any tertiary education. A trustee can be appointed to manage the Trust and ensure the funds are used for educational purposes.

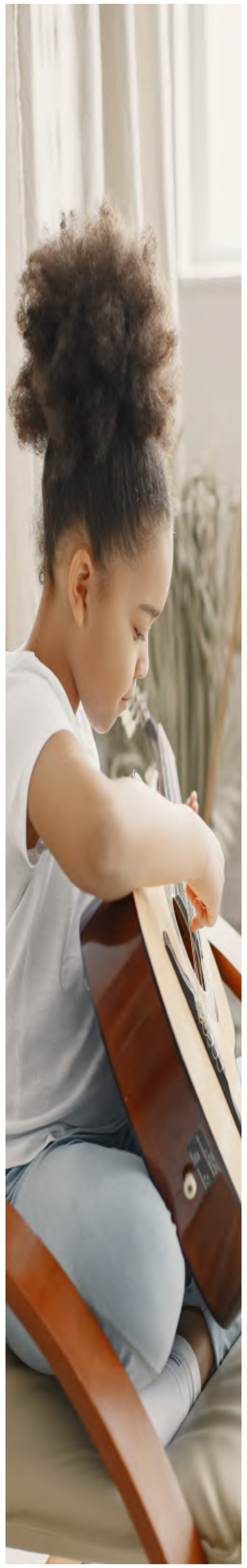
Flexibility: Consider providing flexibility in your Will for changes in your child's educational plans. For example, if your child decides to pursue a different career path or attend a different educational institution you thought they would when drafting your Will, it may be helpful to include provisions that allow for adjustments to be made to the educational funds accordingly.

Age and conditions for distribution: Consider specifying the age or conditions under which the education funds should be distributed. For example, you may want to require that your child reach a certain age or complete a certain level of education before the funds are distributed to ensure that they are used for educational purposes.

Contingency plans: Include contingency plans in case your child does not pursue tertiary education. For instance, if your child chooses not to attend university, you may want to provide for alternative uses of the education funds, such as vocational training or starting a business.

Trustees: Appoint a trustee knowledgeable and experienced in managing educational funds. The trustee will be responsible for managing the funds and making decisions regarding their distribution per the provisions in your Will.

Legal and tax considerations: Seek advice from a qualified attorney and tax professional to ensure that your Will complies with all applicable laws and regulations and to understand the potential tax implications of the education provisions in your Will.



The importance of a Trust

A Trust is a legal arrangement in which a trustee is appointed to manage assets on behalf of a beneficiary. In the case of a minor child, a Trust can be an effective way to ensure that their inheritance is protected and managed properly until they come of age.

By assigning a Trust to manage a minor child's assets, one can ensure they are used for the child's benefit and not wasted or misused.

In terms of South African law, children younger than 18 are not legally capable of managing their inheritance. Any funds inherited by minors - either through testate or intestate succession - must be administered by a testamentary Trust. However, if no such Trust exists or is appointed to manage a minor's inheritance, then any money will be transferred to the state-run Guardian's Fund where they will be administered until the child reaches age 18. The Guardian's Fund forms part of the Master of the High Court.

All money held in the Guardian's Fund is invested in the Public Investment Corporation, an asset-management company wholly owned by the government. Over the years, there have been several reports of extensive fraud and corruption at both institutions*.

Pros and cons of a Trust

There are pros and cons to assigning a Trust to manage a minor child's assets. On the one hand, a Trust provides a structured and managed approach to managing the assets, which can be reassuring for parents who want to ensure their children's financial well-being. On the other hand, a Trust can be expensive to set up and maintain, and there may be ongoing fees associated with managing it.

For this reason, PPS created the PPS Beneficiaries Trust for members who do not have a Trust, nor do they want the assets they have bequeathed to a minor(s) to be paid into the Guardian's Fund.

The PPS Beneficiaries Trust (a not-for-profit Trust) offers a cost-effective solution, eliminating fees for drawing up documentation, capital acceptance and dissolution. Trustees appointed by PPS manage the Trust and take accountability for the investment of funds and administration thereof. It also eliminates the need for individuals to go through the costly and rigorous administration of setting up and maintaining a Trust.

The Trust further caters to beneficiaries' different investment needs by offering a range of investment portfolios managed by highly experienced fund managers. They ensure that the inheritance a PPS member left for their minor beneficiary(ies) will be well-managed until they are an adult(s) and ready to make it a part of their legacy.

Final thoughts

Inspiring your child to make their dreams a reality even after your death is a noble goal. By identifying your child's dreams, creating a Will and establishing a Trust, you can ensure that your child has the support they need to achieve their goals.

* *https://www.citizen.co.za/business/what-exactly-is-the-government-guardians-fund/* and *https://www.ft.com/content/7a8ac00a-64d2-11e8-a39d-4df188287fff*

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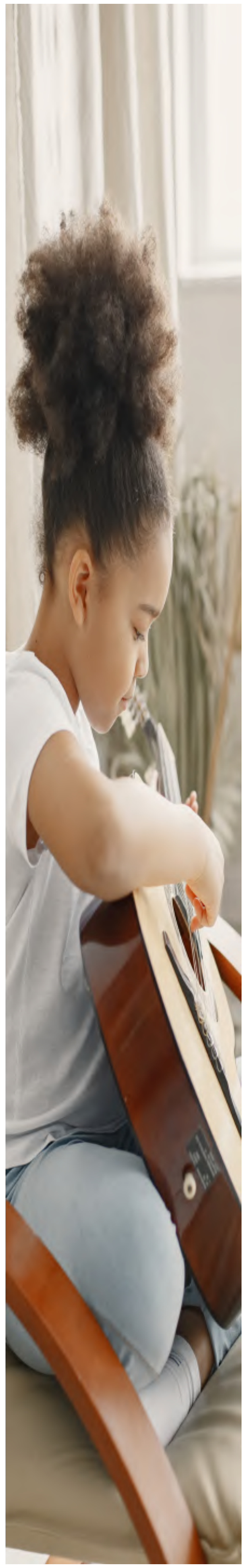

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Roy McMurchie

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In conversation with...

Liz Strydom

Liz Strydom is a FICA Specialist at PPS. She has been working for the company for 45 years and inspires many of her colleagues with her outstanding work ethic and commitment to her job.

Tell us about your early childhood. Where do you come from?

I was born in Turffontein, Johannesburg. I started my education at Laerskool Voorbrand. However, in grade two, my family moved to Meyerton when my parents divorced. I was eight and my mom cared for my two sisters and I. We returned to Johannesburg for standard one. I attended Lena van Velden School and later matriculated from Kensington High.

When did you start working at PPS? How did that come about, and what did you do?

I started working at PPS in 1978. Initially, I worked in the pensions department, where we manually typed data on blue cards that were then filed. Later, I moved to the information department, now known as the Customer Experience department. I primarily dealt with death and cancellation claims. Over the years, I transitioned to various roles and currently work in the Intermediary Services department.

What have been the biggest obstacles in your life?

One of the biggest obstacles I have faced throughout my life is my struggle with speaking in large groups. It has been a constant challenge for me; and even today, I find it daunting to do.

What have been the biggest opportunities in your life and what did they allow you to do?

One of the most significant opportunities I was fortunate to have, was the chance to travel to India for a week. This trip was an opportunity to experience a different country and contribute to the testing of a new system. It was an enriching experience where I had the chance to immerse myself in a new culture and broaden my horizons. It was transformative! It opened doors to personal and professional growth.

What is your life philosophy?

My life philosophy is based on the belief that it will happen if something is meant to be. I trust in God and try to live life to the fullest while maintaining humility.

What about your work makes you want to get up in the morning?

I find joy in my work and finding ways to be more effective. Each day brings something new, making life exciting. I am grateful for the inspiring leaders and colleagues at PPS who motivate me to be passionate about my job. Since we spend significant time at the office, I believe it is essential to enjoy what we do. The most satisfying thing is knowing that you have given your best.

What is the best advice you were ever given and who gave it?

Throughout my life, I have received valuable advice from various sources. One piece of advice that has stuck with me is never to stop asking questions. This encourages me to be curious, seek knowledge and continuously learn and grow. Another valuable piece of advice is to follow my instincts. Trusting my intuition has guided me in making important decisions and navigating uncertain situations.

Additionally, the advice to live life to the fullest has inspired me to embrace new experiences, cherish moments of joy and make the most of every opportunity. Another piece of advice that resonates with me is not to burn bridges. It reminds me to maintain positive relationships, treat others with respect and always leave doors open for future connections.

Lastly, the advice to stay humble has taught me the importance of remaining grounded, appreciating others' contributions and constantly seeking self-improvement. All of this has shaped my outlook on life and influenced my personal and professional growth.

What is the best advice you have for someone looking to move into this area?

Some advice I could give would be to firstly take the initiative. Be proactive in seeking opportunities, volunteering for challenging tasks and showcasing your skills and enthusiasm. Secondly, keep an open mindset. Embrace new ideas, be receptive to feedback and be willing to learn from others. Maintaining a growth mindset will enable you to adapt and thrive in this dynamic field. Additionally, ask for feedback. Seeking input from mentors, colleagues and supervisors will help you identify areas for improvement and hone your skills. Stay positive and maintain a can-do attitude even in the face of challenges. The field you enter may present obstacles, but a positive mindset will help you persevere and find solutions.

Always be ready to learn something new. Stay curious, stay updated with industry trends and seek opportunities for professional development. Moreover, practice good manners, respect and kindness towards your colleagues. Building positive relationships and fostering a supportive work environment are crucial for personal and professional growth. Lastly, avoid gossiping. Engaging in gossip can harm relationships and create a hostile work atmosphere. Instead, focus on building trust and fostering a culture of respect and collaboration.

By following these pieces of advice, you can position yourself for success and fulfilment in any career.

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What is your life philosophy?

My life philosophy is based on the belief that it will happen if something is meant to be. I trust in God and try to live life to the fullest while maintaining humility.

What about your work makes you want to get up in the morning?

I find joy in my work and finding ways to be more effective. Each day brings something new, making life exciting. I am grateful for the inspiring leaders and colleagues at PPS who motivate me to be passionate about my job. Since we spend significant time at the office, I believe it is essential to enjoy what we do. The most satisfying thing is knowing that you have given your best.

What is the best advice you were ever given and who gave it?

Throughout my life, I have received valuable advice from various sources. One piece of advice that has stuck with me is never to stop asking questions. This encourages me to be curious, seek knowledge and continuously learn and grow. Another valuable piece of advice is to follow my instincts. Trusting my intuition has guided me in making important decisions and navigating uncertain situations.

Additionally, the advice to live life to the fullest has inspired me to embrace new experiences, cherish moments of joy and make the most of every opportunity. Another piece of advice that resonates with me is not to burn bridges. It reminds me to maintain positive relationships, treat others with respect and always leave doors open for future connections.

Lastly, the advice to stay humble has taught me the importance of remaining grounded, appreciating others' contributions and constantly seeking self-improvement. All of this has shaped my outlook on life and influenced my personal and professional growth.

What is the best advice you have for someone looking to move into this area?

Some advice I could give would be to firstly take the initiative. Be proactive in seeking opportunities, volunteering for challenging tasks and showcasing your skills and enthusiasm. Secondly, keep an open mindset. Embrace new ideas, be receptive to feedback and be willing to learn from others. Maintaining a growth mindset will enable you to adapt and thrive in this dynamic field. Additionally, ask for feedback. Seeking input from mentors, colleagues and supervisors will help you identify areas for improvement and hone your skills. Stay positive and maintain a can-do attitude even in the face of challenges. The field you enter may present obstacles, but a positive mindset will help you persevere and find solutions.

Always be ready to learn something new. Stay curious, stay updated with industry trends and seek opportunities for professional development. Moreover, practice good manners, respect and kindness towards your colleagues. Building positive relationships and fostering a supportive work environment are crucial for personal and professional growth. Lastly, avoid gossiping. Engaging in gossip can harm relationships and create a hostile work atmosphere. Instead, focus on building trust and fostering a culture of respect and collaboration.

By following these pieces of advice, you can position yourself for success and fulfilment in any career.

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Inspiring yourself

and the next generation

Imagine viewing your life as a captivating novel, divided into distinct chapters that transcend traditional notions of age. Linda Sherlock, Executive Head of PPS Wealth Advisory, explores the possibilities of such a narrative and shares insights on navigating the next chapter of our lives.

Picture a narrative composed of four enthralling segments, each representing a unique personal and professional growth phase. In this reimagined perspective, Chapter 1 unfolds as the adventurous era of adolescence, while Chapter 2 chronicles the journey into the realm of young professionals. In Chapter 3, one reaches the pinnacle of maturity and achievement in one's chosen field, while Chapter 4 beckons with the promise of a new beginning as a seasoned professional.

As I find myself contentedly nestled in Chapter 3, my marriage thriving, my career flourishing and my children confidently forging their own paths, I cannot help but ponder the contours of the next chapter. However, embracing the uncertainty that accompanies Chapter 4 can sometimes be unsettling. The work landscape has undergone profound transformations, and professionals today are **no longer confined to the rigid boundaries of retirement**. Many choose to extend their professional journeys, eagerly embracing new challenges or assuming consulting roles.

Much like previous generations, the notion of a definitive line in the sand marking the end of one's working life no longer resonates with us. We yearn for **a purposeful continuation**, an opportunity to repurpose our hard-earned knowledge, precious time and honed skills. The question lingers: How do we gracefully navigate this uncharted territory, carving out a fulfilling existence in Chapter 4 and beyond?

> **"Ikigai: Some find it withing a single pursuit, while others discover it through multiple avenues."**

Enter Ikigai, a Japanese term that encapsulates our "reason for being". It manifests differently for each individual. Some find it within a single pursuit, while others discover it through multiple avenues. The Western adaptation of Ikigai distils it into four essential questions: Are we doing what we love? Are we contributing to the needs of the world? Do we excel at what we do? And are we reaping the rewards?

Ikigai is **not a fixed destination** but an ever-evolving journey that infuses each moment with purpose. It is the appreciation of life's little joys. Some embody their Ikigai fully, relishing every step and abandoning the concept of conventional retirement. Others find Chapter 4 the true culmination, where a **fresh career or venture ignites a newfound passion**. To help us gauge our proximity to our personal Ikigai, the Western adaptation of this captivating philosophy has distilled it into four essential questions:

Are you doing what you love? Are you contributing to the needs of the world or serving others? Do you excel at what you do? And lastly, are you reaping the rewards of your efforts?

Getting started

There is a basic plan to consider when preparing for the fourth chapter in your life and using Ikigai:

1. Start with questions

- What am I passionate about?
- How will this benefit my community/profession/world?
- How can I do this and be paid for it?

2. Map it out

- What would a typical day look like?
- What do you need to do to get to this?
- How will you enable these changes?

3. How does it feel?

- Your Ikigai will evolve as you do, so allow for changes.
- Does it feel right? If not, reconsider and change.
- Repeat these steps over time.

4. Test it

- Look at what action needs to be taken and what trade-offs may need to be done to give you the time to prepare (studying etc.).
- Research the opportunities available to you.
- Ask your friends, family and colleagues for their input.

5. Support

- Find a mentor or coach to work with you on the transition.
- Talk to others who have made similar changes, what they learnt and would do differently.

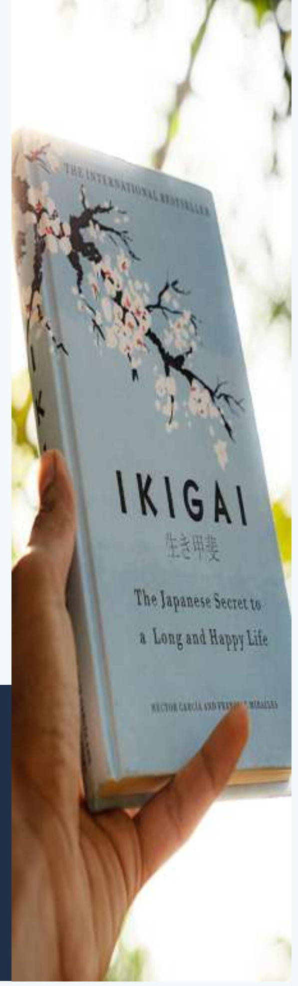
Retirement planning

As we transcend the traditional boundaries of retirement, a remarkable shift occurs not only in our approach to life but also in the realm of financial planning. This transformative change necessitates a complete reassessment of retirement planning across its three distinct phases: creation, build-up, and draw-down. The paradigm expands into a two-dimensional strategy, encompassing the crucial task of securing a reliable income while also repurposing the wealth of skills acquired throughout our professional journeys.

Financial planning **takes on a different hue** in this new chapter of extended or reimagined careers. It requires us to adapt our asset accumulation and income generation strategies to embrace fresh opportunities. As professionals, we may venture into uncharted territories, enhancing existing skills or acquiring new ones. Or, if we choose to remain in our current domain, our vast knowledge becomes a valuable asset to be shared through coaching, mentorship and skills development. This is where the true essence of Ikigai comes into play - discovering fulfilment and purpose by leveraging our expertise to empower others.

Once confined to financial considerations, retirement planning now merges harmoniously with pursuing Ikigai. **It invites us to unlock new possibilities and explore uncharted paths.** Our Ikigai is not a rigid, unchanging force but a dynamic, ever-evolving presence in our lives. It embodies the age-old wisdom that when we immerse ourselves in activities we love, forge meaningful connections and find ourselves in a state of effortless "flow", we transcend mere existence, blossoming into the very best versions of ourselves.

Linda Sherlock



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Getting started

There is a basic plan to consider when preparing for the fourth chapter in your life and using Ikigai:

1. Start with questions

- What am I passionate about?
- How will this benefit my community/profession/world?
- How can I do this and be paid for it?

2. Map it out

- What would a typical day look like?
- What do you need to do to get to this?
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3. How does it feel?

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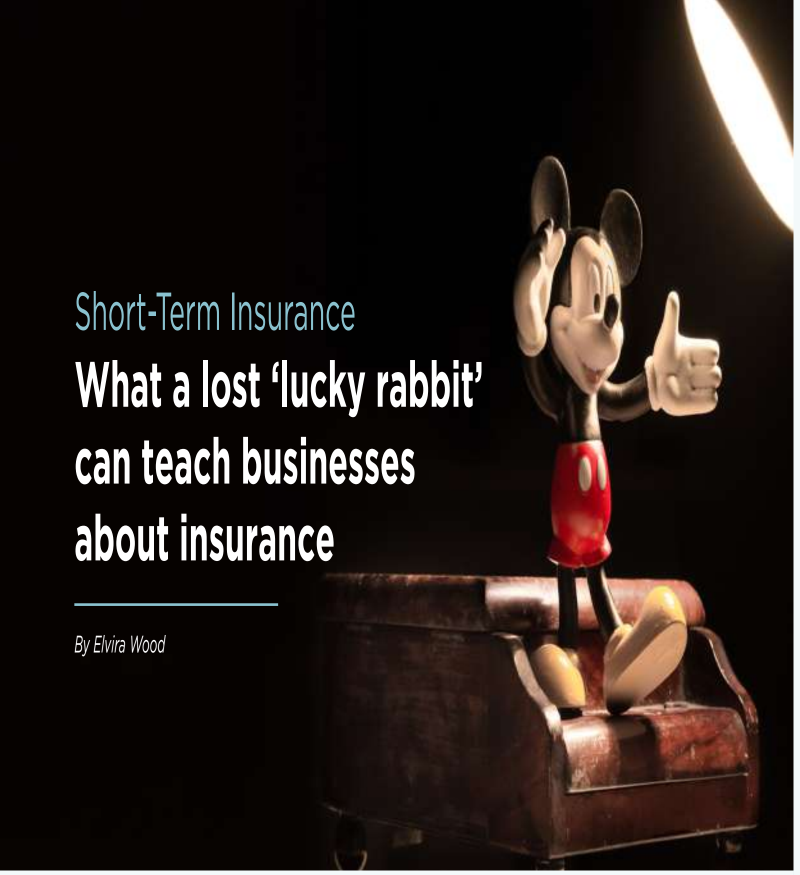

Short-Term Insurance

What a lost 'lucky rabbit' can teach businesses about insurance

By Elvira Wood

Have you ever heard of Oswald the Lucky Rabbit?

If not, fear not; you are probably one of the millions of people around the planet who have never heard of the character. Although Oswald might be called "the Lucky Rabbit", his "luck" - and that of his famous creator - ran out in 1928, causing him to disappear in the shadows of animation for close to 94 years.

He did not see the light of day again until December 2022 when the Walt Disney Company released a short film of this animated character as part of its 100-year celebrations.

You see, Oswald the Lucky Rabbit was Walt Disney, founder of the Walt Disney Company's very first creation. Disney, the American entrepreneur, animator, voice actor and film producer is today best known for characters such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck and is widely regarded as one of the most influential figures in animation history. It is hard to think that he faced any challenges in his career.

However, the story of Oswald shows that Disney's rise to worldwide fame did not come without challenges.

Disney began his career as a commercial artist and cartoonist, creating advertisements and cartoon shorts for distribution in movie theatres in the 1920s. As per releases issued by and archives of the Walt Disney Company, during this time he worked as a contractor for the Universal Film Manufacturing Company (now known as Universal Studios) who requested him to create an animated character for them. That is when he created Oswald.

As much as Disney and the animators he employed provided all the creative for Oswald, he did not own the rights to the character. So, in 1928, when Disney refused to accept a lower rate to produce the cartoon, according to an article by Antonia Carlotta titled *When Walt Disney was fired from Universal*, the studio dismissed him. Because Disney did not own the rights to Oswald, when he severed his ties with Universal, he could not "take Oswald with him" and continue producing the character.

> **"Disney, therefore, not only lost his contract, he in a way also "lost his lucky rabbit" - the main source of income for his company at the time."**

Determined not to give up, Disney created a new character. This time, however, he did not do it on a contract base, but ensured that he owned all the rights and creative control. It is said that he sketched out several ideas, before, one day, while sitting on a train, he had a sudden inspiration. He drew a small mouse with big ears, a round body and a long tail. This mouse was different from anything he had created before.

Disney named his new character Mickey Mouse. However, Mickey's road to stardom was not without hiccoughs. The loveable mouse's first appearance was in a silent film called "Plane Crazy", which was unsuccessful. However, he became an instant hit when Disney added sound to the short film "Steamboat Willie" featuring Mickey as the star. Mickey Mouse's popularity soared and Walt Disney became a household name. Oswald, on the other hand, disappeared.

It was not until 2006 that the Disney Company regained the rights to Oswald after a complex series of negotiations that involved trading sportscaster, Al Michaels, to NBC Universal in exchange for Oswald. Today, Oswald remains a relatively obscure character, but he holds a significant place in animation history as a precursor to Disney's most iconic creation, Mickey Mouse.

The loss of Oswald significantly impacted Disney's business at the time. Oswald was his biggest money maker and with it, Disney also lost many staff he employed to run it (several accepted Universal's new terms and accepted direct contracts from it instead of continuing to work for Disney). However, Disney learned from the experience and prioritised owning the intellectual property rights to his characters and productions from then on. This, in turn, led to the creation of the Walt Disney Company, which focused not only on animation but also theme parks, television shows and other forms of entertainment.

A business owner can easily lose their ability to produce an income. This often happens as a result of an unforeseen business interruption like fire or a natural disaster, and can have a devastating effect on any business. Although having business interruption insurance would not have directly protected Disney's income after losing the right to produce the Oswald cartoons, there are certain types of business interruptions that could have had an impact on his business and that he could have considered insuring.

Even the most successful people face setbacks and obstacles along the way. Having business interruption insurance during this time, however, can provide a safety net reducing financial risks and allowing the business owner to focus on their goals and dreams without worrying about potential financial losses.

Disney's creativity and innovation remain a source of inspiration for people in all fields. His ability to think outside the box and come up with innovative solutions to complex problems has been emulated by many successful entrepreneurs and business leaders. The animator was a visionary who believed anything was possible if you had the imagination and the willpower to make it happen.

PPS Short-Term Insurance understands that a company of any size contributes to South Africa's economy and the community wherever it operates.

Just as an animator such as Disney himself would have required very specific insurance cover for his business - which was indeed small in those early days when he just started off - so does PPS Short-Term Insurance appreciate that each graduate professional's business venture is unique and needs a unique insurance solution.

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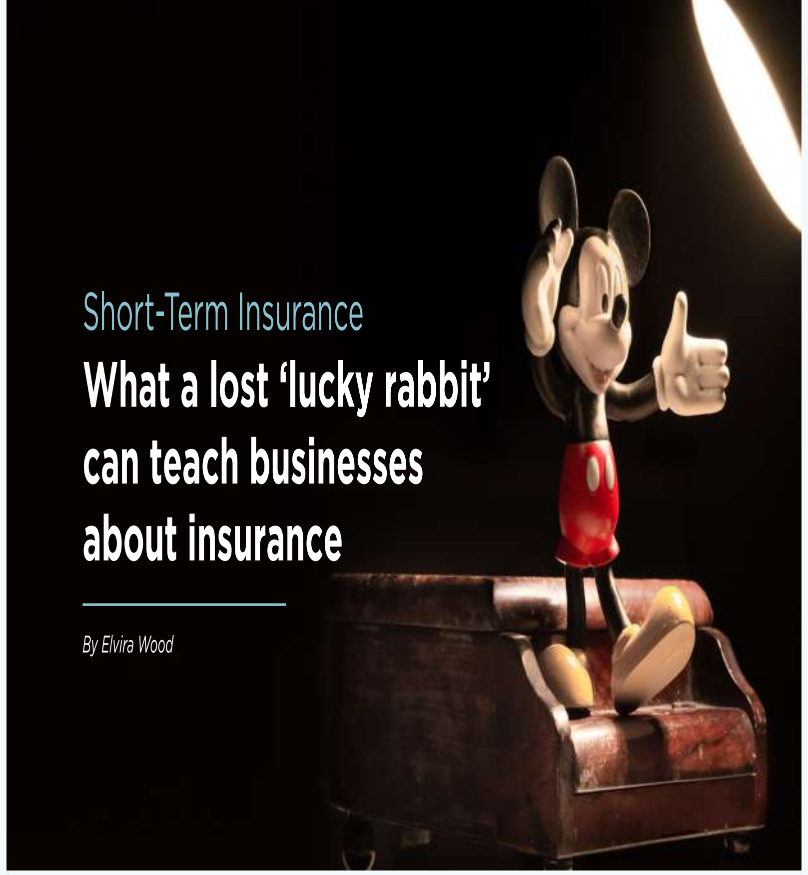

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From hurdles

to success

how indemnity insurance can protect South Africa's medical practitioners

By PPS Health Professions Indemnity

"In the heart of South Africa, nestled among vast fields and rolling hills, laid a small rural town in dire need of medical care. The nearest hospital was miles away, and the community struggled with limited access to healthcare. However, one young and determined health professional, Dr Thabo, was determined to make a difference.

Dr Thabo had always dreamt of opening his own medical practice, and he knew that this was the opportunity to fulfil his dream. With unwavering determination, he worked tirelessly day and night, saving every cent so that he could establish his private practice. He faced numerous challenges along the way, from setting the practice and hiring staff, to securing financing for equipment. But his passion for serving the community inspired him.

Despite the many challenges, the practice finally opened, and he was welcomed with open arms by the grateful inhabitants. His dedication and expertise quickly earned him a reputation as a trusted and skilled health professional. However, there was one topic Dr Thabo had not studied at university and now had to learn about - indemnity insurance.

The elderly doctor in a nearby town, Dr Johnson, took Dr Thabo under his wing and mentored him in the ways of practising medicine in a rural setting. He stressed the importance of having indemnity insurance, which would protect Dr Thabo in case of an unforeseen event such as Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) matters/claims and legal advice. Initially, Dr Thabo was dubious and hesitant about the additional cost of indemnity insurance. Fortunately he listened to Dr Johnson's advice and obtained the professional indemnity cover.

A type of procedure Dr Thabo, being a doctor in a small town, often did, is circumcision. It was specifically because Dr Thabo mentioned to Dr Johnson that he performed these procedures, that his colleague warned him that he should not do so without the necessary indemnity in place. One day, as Dr Thabo was preparing to move to a bigger town to open another practice, he received a complaint from a patient accusing him of negligence with a circumcision.

Dr Thabo was devastated, as he knew that such a complaint could end up in court and could potentially bankrupt him and ruin his career. However, he remembered that he had indemnity, remained calm and contacted his indemnity adviser.

With the support of his legal team, the matter was settled with the patient and Dr Thabo could focus his attention on setting up his new practice. The experience, however, reaffirmed Dr Johnson's advice from years ago - that medical professionals must have indemnity insurance.

Dr Thabo was grateful to Dr Johnson for his mentorship and guidance, as it had saved him from a possibly catastrophic situation. Dr Thabo remained dedicated to providing the best possible healthcare to underserved communities. His reputation as a skilled and compassionate health professional continued to grow and his practices flourished. He was able to touch the lives of countless patients, making a significant impact on the community's health and well-being.

As time went on, Dr Thabo never forgot the lessons he learned from Dr Johnson and remained committed to mentoring young health professionals who were starting their careers."

As much as this is a fictional story, the chance of something like this happening to South African health professionals is very real, confirms Jaco van der Sandt, Chief Executive at PPS Health Professions Indemnity (PPS HPI).

"Just as is the case in other countries, South African health professions may face accusations of malpractice. These accusations can arise from various reasons, such as patients or their families being dissatisfied with treatment outcomes, misunderstandings, miscommunications or even intentional malicious intent. Malpractice accusations can have serious consequences for medical practitioners, including damage to their professional reputation, financial costs associated with legal defence and emotional distress," says Van der Sandt.

Van der Sandt explains that malpractice claims is one of the reasons PPS created health professions indemnity cover in 2019. PPS HPI's cover provides 24/7 medico-legal advice for policyholders without affecting their risk profile, comprehensive cover against liability arising from clinical practice, gap cover protection and claims cover for incidents that occurred prior to inception of the policy if required. It also covers locums and non-professional employees at no extra cost. Group practice cover with additional benefits is unique in South Africa.

Click here to visit PPS HPI.

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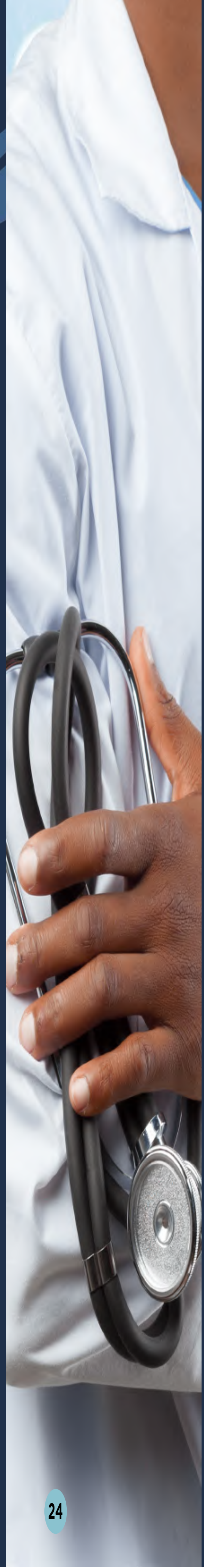

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Click here to visit PPS HPI.
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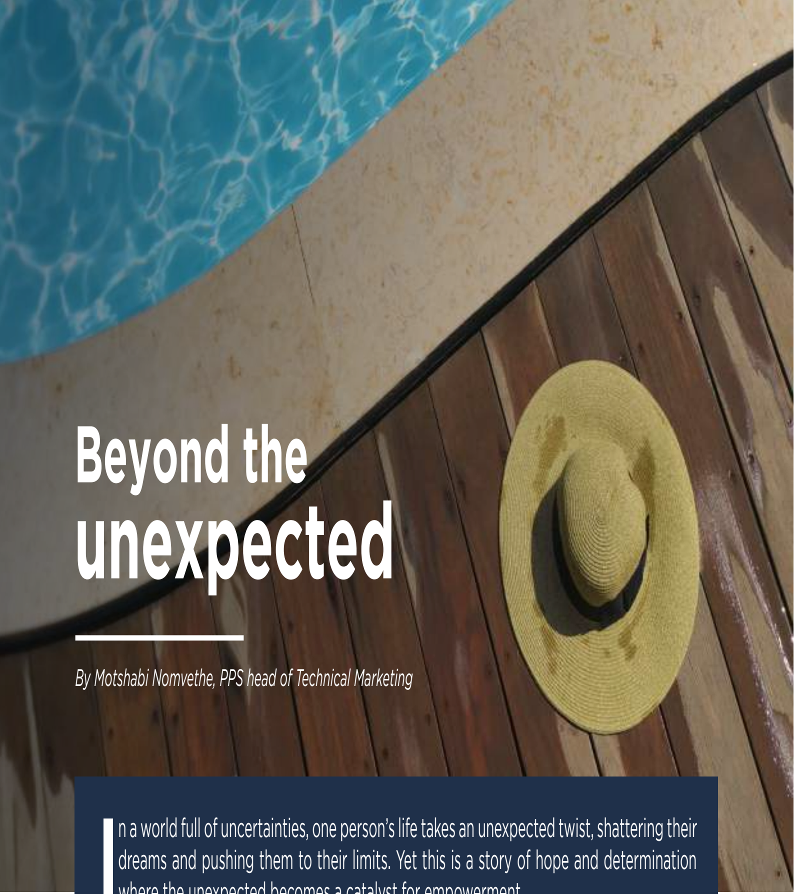


Beyond the unexpected

By Motshabi Nomvethe, PPS head of Technical Marketing

In a world full of uncertainties, one person's life takes an unexpected twist, shattering their dreams and pushing them to their limits. Yet this is a story of hope and determination where the unexpected becomes a catalyst for empowerment.

When we are young, the world feels boundless, and a sense of invincibility permeates the air we breathe. Liane, a talented and ambitious physiotherapy student at the University of the Free State, experienced this youthful optimism first-hand. Little did she know that a holiday adventure in 2019 would forever alter the course of her life. This is the story of Liane's remarkable journey, made possible by the transformative power of insurance.

The life-altering moment

Under the warm sun and amid laughter, Liane and her friends gathered around a swimming pool, ready to embrace carefree moments. Eager to make a splash, Liane decided to dive into the cool water. However, fate had a different plan in store. In a moment of misjudgement, her dive took a tragic turn, causing a devastating impact that left her unconscious.

As Liane regained consciousness, she found herself submerged in the water, paralysed and unable to move her body. Panic enveloped her as she struggled to hold her breath, desperately awaiting help. Amid her disorientation, the sounds of sirens and flashing lights from emergency responders became a blurred backdrop to her fear.

The following day, which was meant to be a joyous celebration of her 25th birthday, brought heart-wrenching news instead. Liane learned that she had suffered a severe spinal injury, rendering her paralysed. Her world instantly flipped upside down, and the future she had envisioned as a successful physiotherapist crumbled before her eyes.

Dual concerns: physical well-being and career

Liane and her family faced two immediate concerns. First and foremost was Liane's physical well-being. The road to recovery would be long and gruelling, demanding intensive medical care, rehabilitation and numerous surgeries. Stripped of her independence, Liane had to rely on others even for the simplest tasks. The emotional toll on both her and her loved ones was immense.

The second concern centred around Liane's career. Physiotherapy had been her passion and calling. The thought of being unable to fulfil her dream and contribute to the well-being of others weighed heavily on her. How would she find her place in the world now that her physical capabilities were limited?

Resilience and unwavering support

In the years following the accident, Liane's journey was marked by resilience, determination and the unwavering support of her family. However, a crucial decision made two years before the incident played a pivotal role in her transformation: obtaining insurance coverage, including disability cover, with PPS. This foresight proved to be a wise choice, as PPS's unwavering support and financial assistance not only helped Liane navigate the challenges posed by her accident but also **empowered her to embark on a different career path**. With the confidence and security of knowing her income would be protected until retirement, Liane embraced her new life.

Creating peace of mind

PPS understands that unforeseen circumstances can instantly disrupt lives, which is why we are dedicated to offering comprehensive coverage that brings peace of mind and security to our members.

> **"Insurance is not merely a safety net; it represents a promise to stand by individuals when they need it most."**

Liane's personal experience highlights the profound impact of PPS's insurance coverage. In 2022 alone, PPS paid out a staggering R3.35 billion in claims, with R957 million allocated to death claims. These numbers reflect the unwavering commitment of the company to supporting its members and their families during times of loss and grief.

Furthermore, sickness benefit claims accounted for a significant portion of the total claims paid by PPS in 2022. With more than R1 billion disbursed, these claims provided vital financial support to members who were unable to carry out their professional duties due to illness or injury. The most common conditions claimed included infectious and parasitic diseases, musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases, and respiratory system diseases. This emphasises the diverse range of illnesses that can affect professionals across various fields.

It is interesting to note that there has been a **noticeable increase in claims from younger age groups**, particularly those between 21 and 40. This serves as a powerful reminder of the importance - as demonstrated by Liane's story - of having insurance coverage even in the early stages of one's career when unexpected events can have a significant impact.

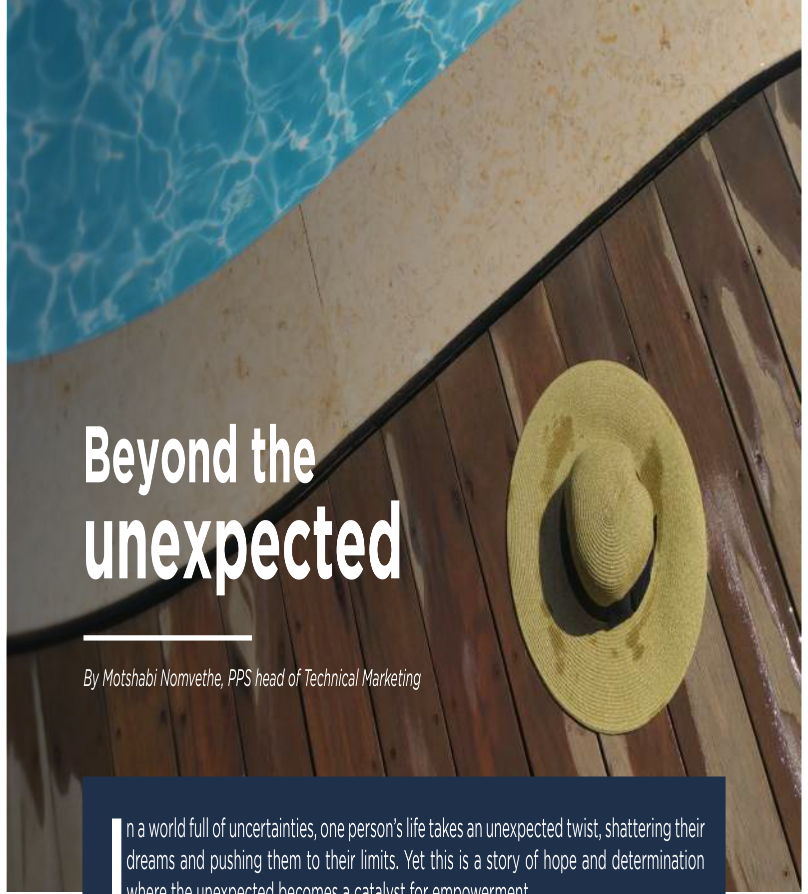
For members who have been receiving a sickness benefit for an extended period and are still unable to perform their professional duties, PPS offers a Permanent Incapacity benefit. In 2022, PPS disbursed more than R749 million to members receiving this benefit. The primary causes of permanent incapacity claims were diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue, mental disorders and neurological conditions. PPS's case management and ongoing financial support provide a lifeline to individuals navigating a challenging path of recovery and adjustment.

Recognising the impact of disabilities, PPS also provides a lump-sum disability benefit to support members in such circumstances. In 2022, PPS paid out R186 million for disability claims, with causes varying from cancer to musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases and neurological diseases. Disabilities can affect anyone at any age and PPS's commitment to providing financial assistance enables individuals to focus on their recovery and adapt to their new life with dignity and support.

Liane's story serves as a powerful testament to the transformative role of insurance. It has not only provided financial support but has also given her the confidence and security to pursue a different career path. By protecting her income until retirement, insurance has been instrumental in helping Liane rebuild her life and find a sense of purpose despite the unexpected challenges she faced.

** See the infographic on page 6 for more details on how PPS paid claims in 2022*

Motshabi Nomvethe



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Saying no to say yes

Discovering inspiration through boundaries

By Elvira Wood

When we think of inspiration, we often associate it with saying yes to new opportunities and challenges. However, there is a hidden wellspring of inspiration in the simple act of saying no. By setting boundaries and refusing what does not align with our values and goals, we unlock a world of possibilities for personal growth, self-discovery, and, ultimately, finding true inspiration.

To start with, saying no allows us to **honour our authentic selves** and align our choices with our values, passions and purpose. By declining opportunities that do not resonate with our true essence, we create space for activities and endeavours that truly inspire and fulfil us. This authenticity fuels our sense of purpose and ignites the flame of inspiration within. Embracing our true selves allows us to pursue meaningful experiences that align with our desires and values.

Saying no helps us **gain clarity about our priorities**. By consciously evaluating each request or opportunity that comes our way, we can assess whether it aligns with our core objectives and aspirations. This process lets us devote our time and energy to what truly matters, leading to a more focused and purpose-driven life. By setting clear priorities, we can make informed decisions that support our long-term goals and bring us closer to our vision of success.

> **"When we say no, we prioritise our well-being and mental health."**

We recognise that self-care is not selfish but essential for personal growth and inspiration. By setting boundaries and taking time for self-nurturing activities, we recharge our energy reserves, enhance our resilience and create a solid foundation from which inspiration can flourish. Engaging in self-care practices such as exercise, mindfulness and quality rest allows us to replenish our minds and bodies, ensuring we can pursue our passions and find inspiration in our daily lives.

Saying no **requires courage**, as it often means going against societal expectations or facing potential disappointment from others. By embracing this courage, we build resilience and self-confidence. Each time we honour our boundaries, we reinforce our self-belief and our ability to make choices that align with our authentic selves. This courage inspires us as we push beyond our comfort zones and pursue new possibilities. It allows us to challenge ourselves and step into unfamiliar territories where growth and inspiration await.

We often **open doors to other opportunities** when we say no. It may be saying no to a demanding commitment that leaves little room for personal growth, only to discover a more fulfilling project or collaboration. These new possibilities bring fresh inspiration, pushing us to explore uncharted territories and expand our horizons. By embracing the unknown and being open to alternative paths, we create space for serendipitous encounters and unexpected opportunities that can lead us to new levels of inspiration and success.

We can become **role models** to those who struggle to set boundaries simply by saying no. Our ability to assert our needs and values inspires those around us to do the same. As we establish healthy limits, we create a ripple effect of empowerment and encourage others to prioritise their own well-being, fostering a culture of inspiration and self-care.

While saying no is a powerful tool for personal growth and empowerment, it is equally important to find inspiration in achieving a balance between work and life. Striking a harmonious equilibrium allows us to nurture all aspects of our being, enhancing creativity, productivity and overall well-being.

We create a supportive framework that fuels our inspiration by prioritising time for relaxation, hobbies and quality connections with loved ones.

> **"In a world that often glorifies saying yes and constantly striving for more, dare to say no when it matters, recognising the inspirational power of doing so."**

By setting boundaries, embracing our authenticity and prioritising our well-being, we create the conditions for inspiration to thrive.

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PPS FOUNDATION
nurturing potential

The journey to greatness

How mentorship can help guide the way

At some point in our lives, we all need guidance, support and wisdom from someone who has been there before us. This is where mentorship comes in. A mentorship relationship can provide invaluable guidance, advice and perspective to help individuals navigate the complexities of life, work and personal growth.

Mentorship has long been recognised as a powerful personal and professional development tool.

The concept dates to ancient Greece, with the word "mentor" coming from Homer's poem "The Odyssey", in which the wise and trusted friend of the main character (Odysseus) is named Mentor.

Homer's epic poem (the original version is said to have 12 109 lines divided into 24 books) written more than 700 years before the birth of Christ, is not only the origin of the term "mentorship" but proved to be a great source of discussion between a very famous mentor and his protégé: Socrates and Plato, where Socrates was said to quote Homer in his conversations with Plato often.

Socrates is widely regarded as one of the greatest philosophers in history, and his teachings and inquiry methods have profoundly influenced Western philosophy. Plato was one of Socrates's most famous students and became a philosopher in his own right, founding the Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the Western world.

Plato, in turn, became a mentor to Aristotle, one of his students at the Academy. Aristotle, who later founded his own school, the Lyceum, built upon Plato's ideas but also challenged some of them. This chain where a mentee later "pays it forward" by becoming a mentor himself, shows what a huge influence mentorship can have on an individual and even the greater society.

But it is not only ancient Greeks who benefitted from mentorship. Throughout the ages, there are examples of extremely well-known individuals who either acted as a mentor or benefitted from mentorship.

Think of the famous classical composer Ludwig van Beethoven. It is well-known that Beethoven was not considered a child prodigy,

as was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. On the contrary, Beethoven's career only really gained momentum in his 20s (compared to Mozart, who was five years old when he started to perform). Records show that when he was about 22 years old, Beethoven began taking music lessons from a new teacher: Franz Joseph Haydn. Haydn, the Austrian composer sometimes referred to as the "father of the symphony", not only taught Beethoven but became his mentor and markedly influenced Beethoven's career. As much as the two are said to often bicker, Haydn helped establish Beethoven's reputation in Vienna by introducing him to influential musicians and patrons. He also exposed Beethoven to new ideas and techniques in composition and encouraged Beethoven to explore new forms and experiment with different musical ideas. Today both Beethoven and Haydn are classical music legends in their own right.

Moving on to modern times, examples of influential mentorships are easy to find.

Nelson Mandela mentored many young activists and leaders throughout his life, including Barack Obama, who became the 44th president of the US. Mandela's leadership and commitment to social justice inspired Obama as he developed his own career in politics.

In South Africa, where many young graduates may not have family members to guide them when they enter the workplace, mentorship programmes like the PPS Graduate Internship Development Programme (GIDP) can be a valuable resource. By pairing young professionals with experienced mentors in their chosen fields, the programme can help to provide the guidance and support that young people need to succeed in their careers. Over the last few years, PPS has taken more than 140 young people through the programme, with an average retention rate of 80%.

PPS's commitment to youth development does not end with the GIDP. Staff members younger than 35 years and showing high potential are eligible to participate in the Young Leadership Forum (YLF). Each year, young leaders are selected to participate in the programme. The YLF aims to not only develop young leaders but also tap into their perspectives to solve real business problems.

"It is important for PPS to contribute to the development of young professionals within the organisation, as well as the graduate professional pipeline in the country. We believe that we are an integral stakeholder that can partner with other organisations such as the government, social organisations and other corporates to ensure that South Africa achieves a better outcome for many young professionals," says PPS Group CEO Izak Smit, in the Foundation's 2021 Annual Report.

PPS further supports mentorship through its Professionals Connect platform where PPS members can raise their hand to become a mentor for one of the many students the PPS Foundation supports.

Visit ppsfoundation.pps.co.za or scan the QR code alongside to find out more about the Professionals Connect platform or to donate towards the PPS Foundation and help South Africa's young professionals make their mark in industry.

> **"A mentor can provide guidance, support and feedback that helps a young professional navigate the complexities of the working world."**

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Rediscovering inspiration

Unlocking creativity and happiness in daily life

By Jaynashree Ellary, PPS Senior Communications Specialist

Amid managing the demands of our daily routines, it is all too easy to succumb to feel overwhelmed and uninspired. The challenges of constant loadshedding, economic fluctuations, rising cost of living and soaring fuel prices do not make it any easier on one's mental well-being. With all these daily concerns and occurrences - over which we have very little control - it is easy to be consumed by what seems like only doom and gloom.

It may even feel like all one does is run in the daily proverbial rat race with little energy left do to anything else. However, reigniting our inspiration can **hold the key to unlocking our creativity**, boosting productivity and restore happiness. An improved mental state will release more "happy" hormones.

But what is inspiration? According to the Oxford Dictionary, it is the transformative process triggered when someone sees or hears something that causes them to have exciting new ideas or makes them want to create something, especially in art, music or literature.

Where does one find it? Fortunately, one does not need to look very far for inspiration to change one's outlook. Nature is full of miracles. We are so used to seeing it that we take it for granted. Birds chirp, blossoms bloom and everything happens as and when it should, irrespective of what humans do. Pause for a moment to take a breath, clear your mind and see the daily miracles again. Watch a sunrise or sunset and soak in the uniqueness of each. Try having your morning cup of coffee or tea outside while doing this - and yes, even now, in winter, there is beauty in early mornings. Take a walk in a park or a hike on a trail and allow yourself to be inspired. It is truly magical what nature has on display each day.

Some other suggestions on how to help to get yourself inspired can include:

- **Read a book:** Literature is a valuable source of knowledge and a wealth of information. It can also prompt one to think about situations from another person's perspective or culture.
- **Listen to music:** The right music can help open your mind and give it the break it may need from pondering or overthinking a situation.
- **Watch a movie:** An old classic or just a re-run of your favourite movie can focus your mind and be a starting point for the creative process.
- **Talk to people.** Conversations can act as a stimulus allowing you to think about things with a new perspective, evoke new feelings and get you thinking creatively. New ideas may already be in your subconscious mind and interacting with people can bring this to the surface. Engage with those around you that you would like to learn from or even friends. Get the conversations going.
- **Get active.** Getting some exercise could also help clear your mind, bringing about a clearer thought process.
- **Travelling, hobbies or creative outlets** also assist in creating a conducive environment to stimulate and foster inspiration. They also give you a break from normal day-to-day activities and evoke different senses and feelings.

Everyday experiences, too, can harbour profound inspiration. Take note of small things like a kind gesture between strangers or even go as far as to do something unexpected and kind for someone else. **By doing what you love, you inspire and awaken the hearts of others.**

Some ways to inspire those around you from www.betterup.com:

- Build up those around you.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be empathetic.
- Practice gratitude.
- Have passion.
- Have clear goals and strive to achieve them.

By embracing these principles, we can infuse our everyday lives with inspiration and appreciation for the world that surrounds us.

Remember, inspiration resides within reach, waiting to be rediscovered and embraced. It is through our presence in the moment and our ability to appreciate the beauty and intricacies of the world around us that we can truly tap into the wellspring of inspiration. Let us strive to be fully present, to open our hearts and minds to the miracles that unfold each day, and to seize the opportunities for growth and creativity that lie within our grasp.

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It may even feel like all one does is run in the daily proverbial rat race with little energy left do to anything else. However, reigniting our inspiration can hold the key to unlocking our creativity, boosting productivity and restore happiness. An improved mental state will release more "happy" hormones.

But what is inspiration? According to the Oxford Dictionary, it is the transformative process triggered when someone sees or hears something that causes them to have exciting new ideas or makes them want to create something, especially in art, music or literature.

Where does one find it? Fortunately, one does not need to look very far for inspiration to change one's outlook. Nature is full of miracles. We are so used to seeing it that we take it for granted. Birds chirp, blossoms bloom and everything happens as and when it should, irrespective of what humans do. Pause for a moment to take a breath, clear your mind and see the daily miracles again. Watch a sunrise or sunset and soak in the uniqueness of each. Try having your morning cup of coffee or tea outside while doing this - and yes, even now, in winter, there is beauty in early mornings. Take a walk in a park or a hike on a trail and allow yourself to be inspired. It is truly magical what nature has on display each day.

Some other suggestions on how to help to get yourself inspired can include:

- Read a book: Literature is a valuable source of knowledge and a wealth of information. It can also prompt one to think about situations from another person's perspective or culture.
- Listen to music: The right music can help open your mind and give it the break it may need from pondering or overthinking a situation.
- Watch a movie: An old classic or just a re-run of your favourite movie can focus your mind and be a starting point for the creative process.
- Talk to people. Conversations can act as a stimulus allowing you to think about things with a new perspective, evoke new feelings and get you thinking creatively. New ideas may already be in your subconscious mind and interacting with people can bring this to the surface. Engage with those around you that you would like to learn from or even friends. Get the conversations going.
- Get active. Getting some exercise could also help clear your mind, bringing about a clearer thought process.
- Travelling, hobbies or creative outlets also assist in creating a conducive environment to stimulate and foster inspiration. They also give you a break from normal day-to-day activities and evoke different senses and feelings.

Everyday experiences, too, can harbour profound inspiration. Take note of small things like a kind gesture between strangers or even go as far as to do something unexpected and kind for someone else. By doing what you love, you inspire and awaken the hearts of others.

Some ways to inspire those around you from www.betterup.com:

- Build up those around you.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Be empathetic.
- Practice gratitude.
- Have passion.
- Have clear goals and strive to achieve them.

By embracing these principles, we can infuse our everyday lives with inspiration and appreciation for the world that surrounds us.

Remember, inspiration resides within reach, waiting to be rediscovered and embraced. It is through our presence in the moment and our ability to appreciate the beauty and intricacies of the world around us that we can truly tap into the wellspring of inspiration. Let us strive to be fully present, to open our hearts and minds to the miracles that unfold each day, and to seize the opportunities for growth and creativity that lie within our grasp.

Jaynashree Ellary

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Recipes:

Find your inspiration in food

Kerusha Govender

By Kerusha Govender, Marketing Specialist at PPS

Winter is the perfect time to cosy up, wrap ourselves in warmth, and savour comforting dishes that nourish us. In this edition of *The Professional*, we invite you to embark on a journey to a world of culinary delights. Here are three hearty recipes that will comfort your soul and delight your taste buds.

Get ready to experience the embrace of a hearty lamb stew, slow-cooked to perfection, with tender chunks of meat and aromatic spices. For a sweet ending, indulge in the rich and indulgent goodness of malva pudding, a traditional South African dessert that will leave you longing for seconds. To round it off, we include two versions of a Sangria recipe - one with "kick" and one without.

Enjoy!

Healthy hearty lamb stew

Ingredients

- One large finely diced onion
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 level teaspoon salt or salt to taste
- 2 green chilies
- 3 teaspoons fresh, grated ginger and garlic
- ½ teaspoon crushed black pepper
- 3 sprigs thyme
- ½ teaspoon rosemary (remove stem)
- ½ teaspoon dhania powder
- ½ teaspoon garum masala
- ½ packet brown onion soup mix or thickener
- 1 packet chunky roasting veggies (or veggies of your choice, chopped peppers, butternut, baby marrow, carrot, mushroom, sweet corn, baby potatoes, etc.)
- 700g cleaned, chopped and trimmed shoulder lamb or lamb knuckle pieces
- 3 cups hot water

Method

Heat a large stew pot on medium to high. Measure 1 tablespoon of cooking oil and add it to the pot. Add in onions and salt. The salt will help the onion caramelise faster. Add ginger and garlic, green chilies, thyme, rosemary and crushed black pepper. Let this braise for 8 minutes. Add in washed lamb and braise on high heat for 8 minutes to seal the fresh flavours into the meat. Add garum masala, dhania powder and half the packet of brown onion soup mix. Add the water and let meat cook for 20 minutes on medium to high heat. Add veggies and cook for a further 15 minutes or until veggies are soft.

Serve with rice or your preferred starch.

Malva pudding

Ingredients

- 250 ml sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ¼ cup apricot jam
- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- ¼ teaspoon of salt
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla essence

Ingredients for sauce

- 1 small can dessert cream
- 60g butter
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons hot water

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C and grease a rectangle oven-proof dish (+/- 24cm x 18cm). Beat sugar, egg, butter and jam together. Sift flour, bicarb and salt together. Mix evaporated milk, vanilla and vinegar together. Fold in flour mixture alternatively with the liquid mixture and mix until well combined. Pour mixture into oven dish and bake for 45 minutes.

For the sauce, heat the cream, remaining butter, sugar and water together and boil on high heat for 5 minutes. Pour sauce over the hot cake once cooked. Serve with ice cream or custard.

Sangria (with or without a 'kick')

Red wine Sangria Ingredients

- 1 bottle red wine
- 1 cup orange juice
- ¼ cup brandy
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons syrup (optional, for sweetness)
- Sliced oranges, apples and berries for garnish

Method

In a large pitcher, combine red wine, orange juice, brandy, lemon juice and syrup (if desired).

Stir well to mix the flavours.

Add sliced fruits to the pitcher and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

Serve the sangria over ice, garnished with additional fruit slices.

Non-alcoholic Sangria Ingredients

- 3 cups grape juice
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 cup apple juice
- 1 cup sparkling water or club soda
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- Sliced oranges, apples and berries for garnish
- Ice cubes

Method

In a large pitcher, combine grape juice, orange juice, apple juice, lemon and lime juice. Stir well to mix the flavours. Add sliced fruits to the pitcher and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Just before serving, add sparkling water or club soda to add a bubbly element. Stir gently to combine. Fill glasses with ice cubes and pour the non-alcoholic sangria over the ice.

Garnish with additional fruit slices. with additional fruit slices.

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Journey to South Africa's inspirational landscapes

Travelling has an extraordinary ability to awaken our senses, expand our horizons and ignite our creativity. Exploring new destinations allows us to step outside our comfort zones, immerse ourselves in diverse cultures and witness the breathtaking beauty of our world. South Africa, a land of remarkable diversity and enchanting landscapes, offers a treasure trove of inspirational experiences. From the untamed wilderness to vibrant artistic hubs and captivating museums, this article unveils five local destinations that are sure to ignite your imagination and inspire you.

Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town, Western Cape

Situated in the vibrant V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA) is a haven for art enthusiasts. Housed in a repurposed grain silo, this cutting-edge museum showcases contemporary African art in all its forms, featuring thought-provoking exhibitions by both established and emerging artists. MOCAA inspires visitors with its diverse collection, avant-garde installations and commitment to showcasing African talent. The museum is open year-round, welcoming visitors from around the globe seeking artistic inspiration.

Drakensberg Mountains, KwaZulu-Natal

The Drakensberg Mountains in KwaZulu-Natal offer an awe-inspiring destination. Towering over the landscape, these majestic mountains boast breathtaking scenery and a sense of tranquillity that is truly captivating. The Drakensberg Mountains provide a haven for nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers alike with their rugged peaks, cascading waterfalls and lush valleys. Explore the numerous hiking trails that wind through the pristine wilderness, allowing you to immerse yourself in the region's natural beauty. Discover hidden caves adorned with ancient San rock art, telling stories of the past and connecting you with the area's rich cultural heritage. Whether admiring the panoramic vistas from a mountaintop or enjoying the serenity of a crystal-clear mountain stream, the Drakensberg Mountains offer a serene escape where you can reconnect with nature and find inspiration in its awe-inspiring wonders.

Mapungubwe National Park, Limpopo

Discover the hidden gem of Mapungubwe National Park, a captivating archaeological site near Musina known as the "Kingdom of Mapungubwe". Once a thriving African kingdom dating back to the 13th century, this park allows you to explore ruins, discover the rich history and culture of the area, and witness the convergence of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers. The park's unique landscapes - including sandstone formations and baobab trees - provide a setting that is sure to inspire creative minds. Plan your visit during the dry winter months (May to September) for pleasant temperatures and optimal wildlife viewing opportunities.

Augrabies Falls National Park, Northern Cape

Located 40 km northwest of Kakamas in the Northern Cape, Augrabies Falls National Park is home to one of South Africa's most impressive natural wonders. The mighty Augrabies Falls cascade down a 56 m gorge, creating a thunderous spectacle and a captivating display of power. Witness the breathtaking views of the falls, embark on scenic walking trails and explore the unique flora and fauna of the arid landscape. The park's rugged beauty, ancient geological formations and the roaring sound of the falls offer a truly immersive experience that will leave you in awe. The best time to visit is from April to September when temperatures are milder and the falls are at their most impressive.

The Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden, Johannesburg, Gauteng

This botanical garden is an enchanting destination offering a serene escape into the beauty of nature. Nestled at the foot of the magnificent Witpoortjie Waterfall, this botanical garden is a haven of tranquillity and biodiversity. Explore the sprawling gardens adorned with a diverse array of indigenous plants, vibrant flowers and lush greenery. Take a leisurely stroll along the meandering pathways, breathe in the fresh air and listen to the soothing sounds of birdsong. The garden is home to a variety of bird species, making it a paradise for birdwatchers and nature enthusiasts. Find a peaceful spot to relax and unwind, perhaps near the tranquil dam or beneath the shade of a towering tree. The Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden offers a sanctuary for contemplation, rejuvenation and appreciation of the natural world, away from the hustle and bustle of city life. It is a place that inspires a deep connection with nature and a renewed sense of wonder.

Whether you find solace in the untouched wilderness, seek inspiration in artistic expressions or immerse yourself in the history and culture of a place, South Africa has something to offer every traveller. So, embark on a journey of exploration, open your mind to new possibilities and allow the transformative power of travel to unlock the inspiration that lies within you.

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Book review

Finding your

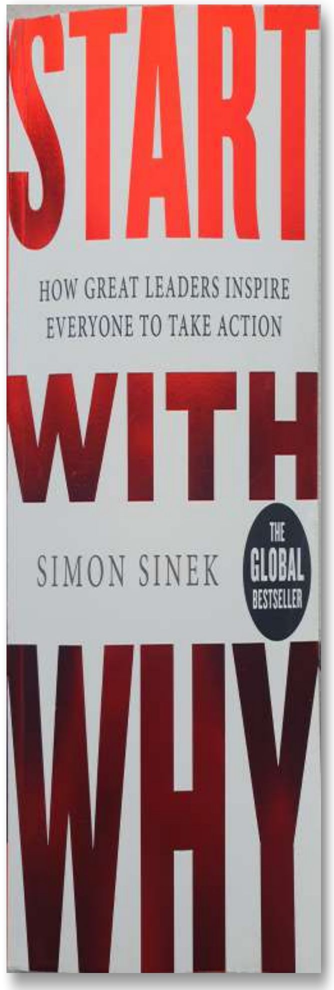
Book: Start with Why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action
Author: Simon Sinek
Review by: Elvira Wood

Have you ever contemplated the deeper meaning behind your actions and the driving force behind your decisions? In *Start with Why*, author Simon Sinek invites readers on an introspective journey, urging them to explore the concept of uncovering their "why" – the underlying passion and belief that propels them forward. This thought-provoking book delves beyond the surface-level understanding of motivation and provides a roadmap for unlocking one's true purpose.

Throughout the pages of *Start with Why*, Sinek weaves together captivating narratives and compelling examples of inspiring individuals and companies. He showcases renowned leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., Steve Jobs and the Wright brothers, highlighting their ability to inspire and motivate others by sharing their underlying purpose. Their stories serve as powerful reminders that it **is the "why" that creates lasting impact** and fosters unwavering loyalty.

"People do not buy what you do; they buy why you do it." This impactful quote encapsulates Sinek's core message. He emphasises the importance of understanding and communicating our "why" before delving into the "what" or "how". According to Sinek, great leaders and organisations consistently lead with their underlying purpose, forming a deep emotional connection with their audience. By aligning our actions with our "why", we not only gain clarity and direction, but we also inspire others to join our cause. He goes as far as to say: "There are only two ways to influence human behaviour: you can manipulate it or you can inspire it". With this, he highlights the stark contrast between manipulation, which seeks to control and exploit, and inspiration, which taps into the deeper motivations and beliefs of individuals. By choosing the path of inspiration, we can foster genuine connections, ignite passion and create lasting change.

Finding our "why" is not just about achieving personal fulfilment; it also holds the key to igniting innovation and driving success. Sinek emphasises that our purpose provides us with a



compass, guiding us through the sea of distractions and short-term goals prevalent in today's world. By understanding why we do what we do, we tap into a reservoir of motivation that propels us forward, even in the face of challenges. Our "why" becomes the driving force behind our perseverance and resilience.

Start with Why encourages readers to embark on a journey of self-reflection, inviting them to contemplate their passions, values and the impact they aspire to make. Sinek poses the fundamental question, **"Why do I get out of bed in the morning?"** By exploring this question, readers gain a deeper understanding of their true motivations and uncover a sense of purpose that transcends superficial desires. He adds to this writing: "Working hard for something we don't care about is called stress; working hard for something we love is called passion."

While some may criticise the book for lacking in-depth strategies for identifying and living out one's purpose, it remains a valuable guide for those seeking inspiration and direction. Sinek's emphasis on the significance of our "why" is a powerful reminder that **true success stems from understanding our purpose** and using it as a guiding force in all aspects of our lives.

In a world where superficial pursuits and short-term goals sometimes shadow our actions, *Start with Why* serves as a wake-up call. By delving into the depths of our motivations and uncovering our true purpose, we have the opportunity to create a profound impact on ourselves and those around us. Let us take Sinek's teachings to heart and embark on a journey of self-discovery, aligning our actions with our "why". As we embrace our purpose and live with intention, we have the potential to inspire and transform the world.

So, I urge you to reflect upon your own "why" and start making a difference today. Your purpose awaits, and the possibilities are boundless.

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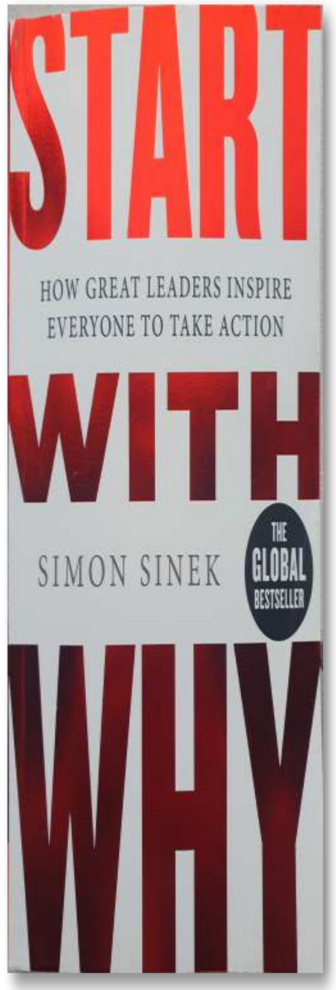

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Embracing innovation
How chatbots transform the workforce

The world of work has been rapidly evolving in recent years, with advancements in information technology (IT) playing a pivotal role. From automation to artificial intelligence (AI), these developments are transforming how professionals work, enhancing productivity, efficiency and effectiveness across various industries. One such innovation that has been gaining momentum is the development of chatbots, with ChatGPT probably the one that is taking centre stage.

Now, in a follow-up to the article *AI: Hero? Or greatest villain ever?* in the March 2023 edition of *The Professional*, we take a closer look at specifically what chatbots are, what they can do and whether they will really change the world of work as much as is speculated in the media.

What are chatbots?

A chatbot is a computer program that uses AI and natural language processing (NLP) to simulate conversation with human users via text- or voice-based interactions. Chatbots are designed to understand and respond to user inquiries or commands conversationally, mimicking human-like interactions. They can be used for various purposes, such as customer service, sales and marketing, information retrieval and virtual assistance. Chatbots can be deployed on multiple platforms, including websites, messaging apps, social media and voice assistants.

Chatbots have come a long way from their early days of basic rule-based systems that could only respond to limited commands. With advancements in NLP and machine-learning techniques, chatbots have become more sophisticated and capable of engaging in complex conversations with users.

Inspiring new ways of working

One of the ways in which chatbots could inspire professionals to adopt new ways of working is by serving as virtual assistants that can handle a wide range of tasks. From scheduling appointments and managing e-mails to providing real-time language translation and conducting research, chatbots can streamline and automate repetitive and time-consuming tasks, freeing up professionals to focus on higher-value work. For instance, busy executives can delegate routine administrative tasks to a chatbot, allowing them to prioritise strategic decision-making and creative problem-solving. This increases productivity, reduces the risk of burnout and enhances work-life balance.

The human-like text responses from chatbots open new possibilities for communication and collaboration in professional settings. For instance, chatbots can assist writers in content creation, providing suggestions and proofreading content. It can also help create marketing copy, social media posts and other written materials, saving time and effort. In customer service, chatbots can provide personalised and timely responses to customer inquiries, resolving issues and enhancing customer satisfaction.

In addition to their operational benefits, chatbots can also serve as a tool for professional development. By providing access to a vast repository of information and knowledge, chatbots can assist professionals in staying up-to-date with the latest industry trends, research findings and best practices. They can also act as virtual mentors, offering guidance and suggestions for career growth and development.

This can be particularly useful for early-career professionals who may benefit from the expertise and insights of experienced practitioners.

In customer service, chatbots can handle routine inquiries from customers, such as checking order status, providing product information and resolving fundamental issues. This allows customer service representatives to dedicate their time and expertise to more complex customer interactions, where human judgment and creativity are required. As a result, customer service teams can provide more personalised and efficient service, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Not all good news

However, it is important to note that while chatbots offer significant benefits, they are not without limitations. AI models are only as good as the data they are trained on and may still have limitations in understanding complex nuances, emotions and context in some cases. It is also essential to ensure that chatbots are used ethically and responsibly, with considerations for data privacy, security and fairness. Human oversight and intervention are necessary to avoid potential biases, errors or misinterpretations.

Some of the other negatives to consider include:

Job displacement: One of the major concerns is that chatbots and AI technologies could replace jobs that involve routine and repetitive tasks. For example, chatbots can handle basic inquiries and data processing in customer service or data entry roles, which may lead to job losses for human workers in those roles.

Lack of human touch: Chatbots and AI cannot provide the same level of human empathy and emotional intelligence. In professions requiring high levels of human interaction, such as counselling or social work, chatbots may not fully replace the need for human professionals who can provide emotional support and nuanced understanding.

Bias and fairness: Chatbots and AI systems can perpetuate bias and discrimination if not properly designed and trained. For example, if a chatbot is trained on biased data, it may inadvertently exhibit biased behaviour in its responses, which can have ethical and legal implications, especially in fields such as recruitment and hiring. The March 2023 article referred to earlier on, has examples of this.

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Technical limitations: Chatbots and AI technologies have limitations in accuracy, reliability and adaptability. They may not always understand complex queries, provide inaccurate or incomplete responses and struggle with context-specific nuances. This can result in suboptimal performance in certain situations, especially in fields that require critical thinking and decision-making skills.

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There is no doubt that chatbots in the evolving work landscape bring possibilities and considerations. Yes, they boost productivity, customer service and professional development, but limitations exist. Job displacement, lack of human touch, bias, privacy risks, technical constraints, ethics and human reliance on AI require careful thought. Therefore, balancing chatbot potential and human interaction is vital. This will shape the future where humans and chatbots collaborate, unlocking productivity while preserving human connection.

Embracing innovation
How chatbots transform the workforce

The world of work has been rapidly evolving in recent years, with advancements in information technology (IT) playing a pivotal role. From automation to artificial intelligence (AI), these developments are transforming how professionals work, enhancing productivity, efficiency and effectiveness across various industries. One such innovation that has been gaining momentum is the development of chatbots, with ChatGPT probably the one that is taking centre stage.

Now, in a follow-up to the article *AI: Hero? Or greatest villain ever?* in the March 2023 edition of *The Professional*, we take a closer look at specifically what chatbots are, what they can do and whether they will really change the world of work as much as is speculated in the media.

What are chatbots?

A chatbot is a computer program that uses AI and natural language processing (NLP) to simulate conversation with human users via text- or voice-based interactions. Chatbots are designed to understand and respond to user inquiries or commands conversationally, mimicking human-like interactions. They can be used for various purposes, such as customer service, sales and marketing, information retrieval and virtual assistance. Chatbots can be deployed on multiple platforms, including websites, messaging apps, social media and voice assistants.

Chatbots have come a long way from their early days of basic rule-based systems that could only respond to limited commands. With advancements in NLP and machine-learning techniques, chatbots have become more sophisticated and capable of engaging in complex conversations with users.

Inspiring new ways of working

One of the ways in which chatbots could inspire professionals to adopt new ways of working is by serving as virtual assistants that can handle a wide range of tasks. From scheduling appointments and managing e-mails to providing real-time language translation and conducting research, chatbots can streamline and automate repetitive and time-consuming tasks, freeing up professionals to focus on higher-value work. For instance, busy executives can delegate routine administrative tasks to a chatbot, allowing them to prioritise strategic decision-making and creative problem-solving. This increases productivity, reduces the risk of burnout and enhances work-life balance.

The human-like text responses from chatbots open new possibilities for communication and collaboration in professional settings. For instance, chatbots can assist writers in content creation, providing suggestions and proofreading content. It can also help create marketing copy, social media posts and other written materials, saving time and effort. In customer service, chatbots can provide personalised and timely responses to customer inquiries, resolving issues and enhancing customer satisfaction.

In addition to their operational benefits, chatbots can also serve as a tool for professional development. By providing access to a vast repository of information and knowledge, chatbots can assist professionals in staying up-to-date with the latest industry trends, research findings and best practices. They can also act as virtual mentors, offering guidance and suggestions for career growth and development.

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This can be particularly useful for early-career professionals who may benefit from the expertise and insights of experienced practitioners.

In customer service, chatbots can handle routine inquiries from customers, such as checking order status, providing product information and resolving fundamental issues. This allows customer service representatives to dedicate their time and expertise to more complex customer interactions, where human judgment and creativity are required. As a result, customer service teams can provide more personalised and efficient service, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Not all good news

However, it is important to note that while chatbots offer significant benefits, they are not without limitations. AI models are only as good as the data they are trained on and may still have limitations in understanding complex nuances, emotions and context in some cases. It is also essential to ensure that chatbots are used ethically and responsibly, with considerations for data privacy, security and fairness. Human oversight and intervention are necessary to avoid potential biases, errors or misinterpretations.

Some of the other negatives to consider include:

Job displacement: One of the major concerns is that chatbots and AI technologies could replace jobs that involve routine and repetitive tasks. For example, chatbots can handle basic inquiries and data processing in customer service or data entry roles, which may lead to job losses for human workers in those roles.

Lack of human touch: Chatbots and AI cannot provide the same level of human empathy and emotional intelligence. In professions requiring high levels of human interaction, such as counselling or social work, chatbots may not fully replace the need for human professionals who can provide emotional support and nuanced understanding.

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From surviving to thriving

Empowering yourself through movement and mindset

Warren Flood, a movement and mindset coach, urges us to break free from the constraints of our hectic lives and embrace a new approach to well-being. In this inspiring article, he highlights the importance of prioritising our health and taking active control of our bodies and thoughts.

In today's hectic times, it has become absolutely paramount that we take control of our well-being and become active participants in our health. In working with so many individuals, from corporate to entrepreneurs, I have found that it is all about developing systems where the support of the body is paramount.

In the melee of making a living, raising children, doing deals, expanding a business or excelling in a corporate position, movement and mindset, nutrition and self-care need to be scheduled as an absolute priority in a way that is counterintuitive to most. I have often been asked, "Who has the time to train?".

But let us be honest. Science has shown what we instinctively have known all along; **movement is life**. Stephan Murray of the Health Architects recently said on a Healthy Weigh talk that DNA is not coded for inactivity and, as such, the more inactive we are, the more our bodies shut down.

With the rapid rise in sitting all day - in some cases as long as 16 hours at a time - our bodies are indeed shutting down, becoming inflamed, struggling in the face of this new sedentary disease which will render more people ill than any other scourge has ever done so.

> **"Our bodies are born to express life, movement and vitality."**

The first thing I check with clients is their vitals, their natural store of energy that is kept stable by bringing the resources of sleep, nutrition, movement and self-care. To not go out and seek vitality from some external source, but to regulate the body with frequent, deliberate maintenance, worked into a daily schedule without fail. Once this is done, I like to create a very clear and precise awareness of the type of thinking and language the person uses all the time. The one thing I always ask my clients is, "Would you teach your thinking and language use to a group of children to go out and thrive in life?". To quote Dr Caroline Leaf from her book Think, Learn and Succeed: "Your genetic activity is largely determined by your thoughts, attitudes and perceptions, which collectively form your mindset."

The kicker for me here is if you look at that statement, mindset gets formed by a "what we see is what we get" environment. However, by changing this outlook, **we are invited to think beyond our environment** - and yes, our bodies and thoughts are part of that environment.

If we can acknowledge that our bodies are naturally built for movement and physical expression, qualities that we greatly admire in individuals who excel in physical prowess, we find ourselves yearning to emulate them, even though this desire may be transient for some.

The new way of thinking invites us to understand that the mind takes priority. It is an ever-growing, evolving entity that thrives on new experiences, curiosity, challenges and excitement. Have you recently had a good dose of those things in your life? How much of your day-to-day existence is inspired, inquisitive and inviting? **The responsibility lies with us** because we are the ones in control of our own thoughts and perspectives.

We live experiencing our own thinking folding back on itself, not knowing the full potential of a wildly wise, effervescent mind just waiting to be unleashed. In working with such a cross-section of clients from all walks of life, I have come to trust and understand that your very best life, business deal, the experience of your body and even your best relationships are yet to come.

> **"Within every single one of us lies the purest of potential. We can do all this and so much more."**

So, I invite you with a slight paraphrase of Dylan Thomas's poem "to not go gently into the good night!". **Take up the challenge and come alive through movement**.

One of the ways you can do so as a PPS member is to join us in September for the next PPS Healthy Weigh Challenge (HWC). The HWC is an eight-week programme incorporating movement, nutrition and self-care, with live weekly talks and an accountability system including recording body weight and measurements, keeping track of steps and exercise done, as well as talk and event attendance.

One of the challenge's most critical aspects is the sense of community, where participants can give and receive real-time feedback, while having a weekly talk from a professional in their field, such as exercise specialists, dieticians, psychologists and coaches, to name a few, speaking directly to PPS's belief that success is better shared.

So, in the pursuit of your very best life, embrace the challenge, seize the opportunity and let your potential shine.

**Warren Flood has worked with the HWC team for the last five years as a host and speaker. When not busy with the challenge, Warren works as a movement and mindset coach, using movement and mindfulness as modalities to a better life.*

Warren Flood

Days to note

July	
3	Plastic Free Day
7	World Chocolate Day
18	Mandela Day
19	Muharram/Islamic New Year (tentative date)
31 July - 5 August	National Science Week
August	
8	International Cat Day
9	Women's Day
12	World Elephant Day
13	International Left Handers Day
19	World Humanitarian Day
30	Raksha Bandhan
31	African Traditional Medicine Day
September	
5 - 11	National Book Week
6	Secretary's Day
7	Janmashtami
15 - 17	Rosh Hashanah
18	Ganesh Chaturthi
19	Talk Like A Pirate Day
23	Spring equinox
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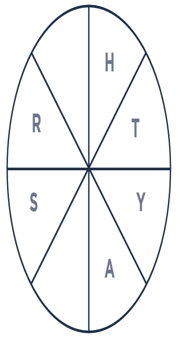
PRO-Quiz

Are you a "pro" when it comes to quizzes?

Challenge your brain with these five quizzes.

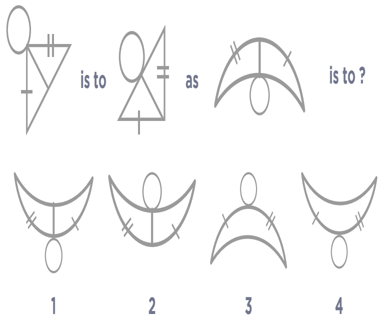
1. Insert the missing letters:



2. Insert the missing number:

   4 7 9 11 14 15 19 ?

3. Insert the missing figure:



4. Find the word that can be prefixed by all the following:

   S, R, H, CL, D, F, G, B, N, P, T, W

5. Find the odd man out:

   KINSECD
   SLEWL
   NIENIEST
   FEDEO
   TISWF

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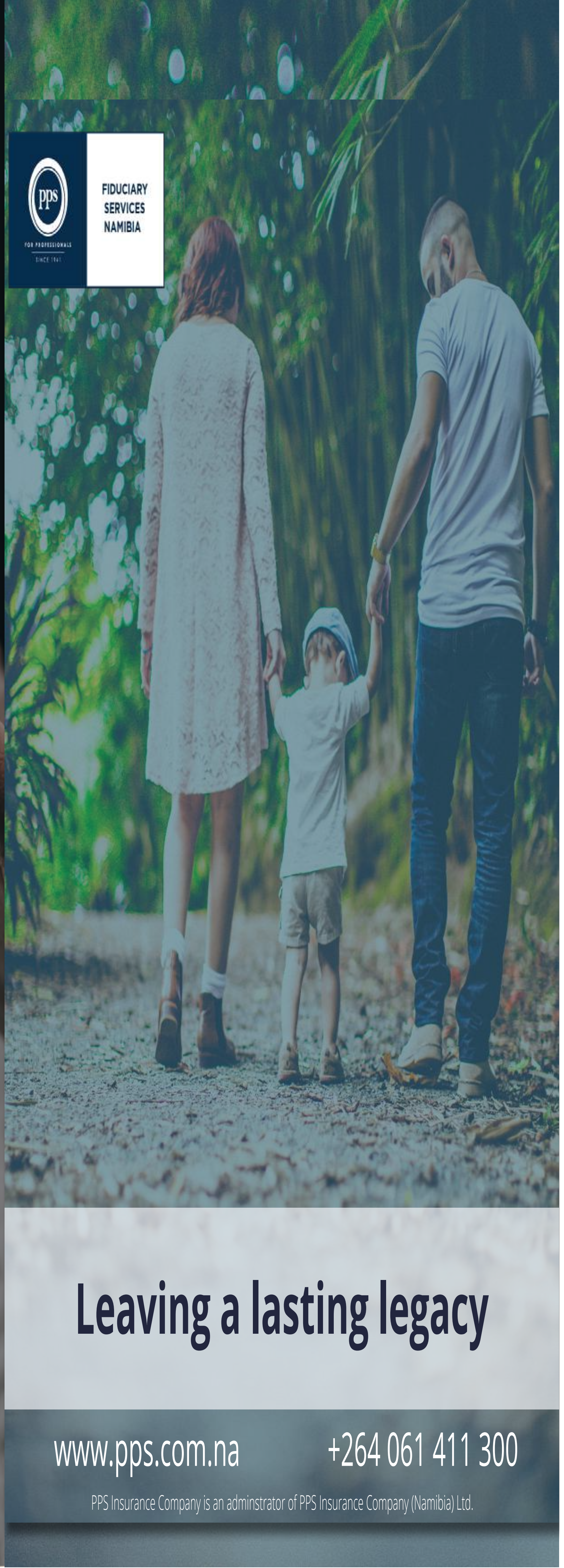
PRO-Quiz Answers:

1. U and D. (The word reads THURSDAY in an anti-clockwise direction)
2. 19. (There are two alternating series; one ascending by 5, the other by 4)
3. 1. (The main figure is turned over, and the little circle is transferred to the other side)
4. EAR
5. NIENIEST = EINSTEIN (All the others are famous writers: Dickens, Wells, Defoe, Swift)



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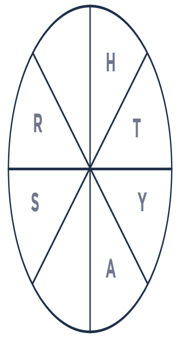

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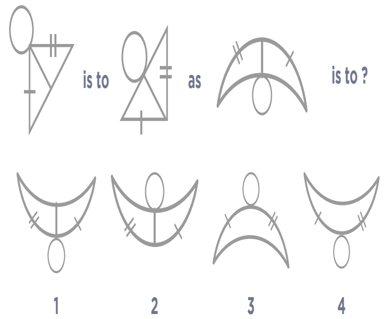

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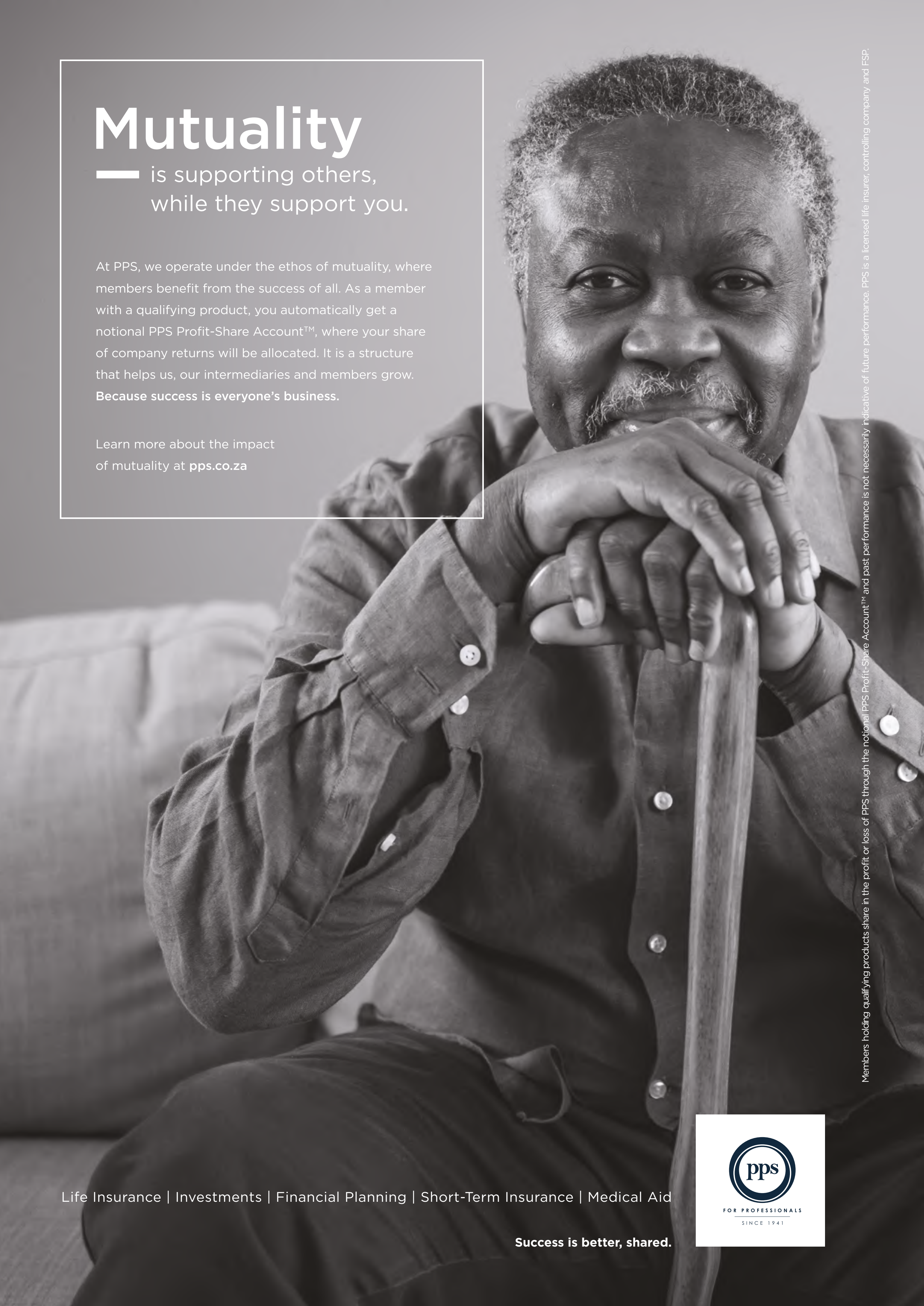
Mutuality
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while they support you.
At PPS, we operate under the ethos of mutuality, where members benefit from the success of all. As a member with a qualifying product, you automatically get a notional PPS Profit-Share Account™, where your share of company returns will be allocated. It is a structure that helps us, our intermediaries and members grow.
Because success is everyone's business.
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