

# Fixing cars is my passion

By Temana Mabula

**J**ohann Malan completed his B.COM Marketing degree only to realise he was not cut out for the field. This propelled him to ask himself: “What do I enjoy doing?” The answer has proven to be a catalyst for turning his life around!

Deep introspection into his career choice led him to realise that office work was not his ‘thing’ and so he decided to steer his career in a different direction, fixing cars. This, according to Malan, was the best career move he made!



On the job with Johann Malan



Johann getting ready to rumble

He is currently an Automotive Repair Apprentice at Triomf Panel Beaters in Bloemfontein. August 2014 became the dawn of a new era for his career. He contacted the merSETA for assistance, a move which gave birth to his new journey. His job entails learning about the motor vehicles repair process, booking in cars, stripping and assembling parts and repair/replacement of damaged parts.

“My motivation comes from seeing a vehicle go through the repair process and come out perfectly repaired.

To top it off, knowing that not even the most trained eyes would be able to pin-point where the repair was done is just...priceless,” he explains.

Malan’s career started at a car rental company, which he says ignited his interest and passion in the motor industry after a long period of unfulfillment in his previous jobs. “The society we live in tends to look down on blue collar professions. One should never let society’s perception of an ‘acceptable’ profession influence their decision on what career path to follow,” says Malan.

He cites an invitation by the merSETA to give a keynote speech at the Annual General Meeting for Free State and Northern Cape regions in 2016 as one of his most memorable moments.

He regards this experience to have been deeply humbling, particularly the positive feedback he received after giving the speech.

“The responses I received from the merSETA CEO, Dr Raymond Patel and 100 industry leaders were truly amazing,” he says.

He goes on to add that the merSETA is an invaluable part of the motor industry and has been instrumental in him realising his dreams and achieving his goals.

Asked about the challenges facing the motor industry, Malan says the industry contributes significantly to South Africa’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and therefore the inflation affecting general overhead costs, consumables, parts prices, automotive paint, electricity etc. are of concern.

“The issue is that the insurance companies, who are the main work providers for the motor repair industry, are constantly battling and negotiating lower labour and paint rates from the automotive repairers. This leaves the automotive repairers in the middle with pressure from both sides,” explains Malan.

“Mr Dawid de Lange and Mr Louis van Niekerk are my greatest mentors. I am forever indebted to them for the immeasurable knowledge they have instilled in me,” he adds. Growing up on a farm outside Bloemfontein, Malan enjoyed the open space, fresh air and outdoor activities.



Johann doing what he likes

Malan wishes to learn more about other aspects of the motor repair business, including the managerial and financial aspects. He is currently studying Management Accounting with The Chartered Institute of Management Accounting (CIMA). This, coupled with the mentoring he receives from Triomf directors, may as well lead him on his path to achieving that.

His father passed away in 2010, but the principles and ideals he taught him, he says, have had an enormous and lasting impact.

Malan plans to qualify as an Automotive Repairer by the end of 2017 and aspires to one day becoming director of an automotive repair company, his greatest goal.