A bi-annual wrap-up of Nampak business news

LIFE LESSONS
Give more and you'll get back even more

CAN MCKENZIE
Can smile, can learn, CAN DO!

Excellence expands
Our people venture upward, outward ... and beyond
David Smith, newly appointed divisional managing director of Nampak Closures, Tubes & Crates describes himself as an open book. If so, it contains just three words: respectful, realistic and diligent. These qualities have enabled him to write an inspiring life story.

David Smith is a powerful example of working yourself up through the ranks—literally. From standing in a line of 100 casual workers looking for a school vacation job in November 1984, to working night shift on the shopfloor, he has carved a career path that took him all the way to the top as divisional managing director of Nampak Closures, Tubes & Crates.

“There’s nothing unusual in that,” he says with signature humility. “I just worked like any other person who was employed.”

That’s not strictly true, especially when you learn that as a young school-leaver working night shift he “borrowed” cleaning materials from his parents’ home so that he could keep the production area sparkling. (See article alongside.) Going beyond the call of duty is David’s norm.

His 31-year journey with Nampak has made him open to learning from the best in life, as well as from the humblest people; “some of whose names would be obscure as they never operate in the limelight.” He draws immense pleasure from engaging with people in general. “My biggest lesson learnt several years ago has now become my greatest advantage – ‘deep’ listening,” he relates. “It offers me clarity and affords the speaker the rare privilege of being truly heard.”

Business as usual
David has passed his 100-day milestone as MD and he’s satisfied with his navigation skills. “My goal was to maintain the steady course Chris Brink, the previous MD, had led us upon. My first objective was to ensure that the business performs as usual with little to no interruption as regards customer service, sales, retention of key staff and budgetary promises. We achieved this largely due to the buy-in by the entire workforce, irrespective of rank. Another strong contributor to this short-term success was that I worked very closely with Chris, who provided a platform of mentorship that has seen me move into this role seamlessly. When invited for the first time as MD...

From the shopfloor: Work like no-one’s watching
David worked his first 14 months at Nampak as a general worker on the night shift in the White-cap (Food and beverage metal closures) and ROPP (Roll On Pilfer Proof) departments.

“The greater majority of the production staff would take a nap for an hour or two between 04:00 and 06:00. Being a Compound Attendant, I was instructed by the mechanics on the production line to make a sort of sleeping quarters for them. I opened up large cardboard boxes on both sides, pushed them into one another so as to make a long shute in which the mechanics happily had their ‘40 winks’.

“Being too young for naps, I then pulled out the Brasso I secretly ‘borrowed’ from my parents’ home and continued to polish all that I could on the line. This followed a vigorous clean-up of the cement floors between the production lines using only sawdust, water and a hard broom.

“Unbeknown to me, my efforts were noticed by the Stores Superintendent who invited me to her office one day and informed me that it had been agreed with HR that I would now work in the Stores as a clerk, which became my first day shift job.”
to our Rigid’s Board Meeting in April, I was able to report that we had performed in line with budget and were well on our way to meeting the set targets for financial year-end (September 2016)." Having grown up in the business, his integration was smoother than most affairs. "There is something about continuity, about executing succession planning well. I have great appreciation for the manner in which I was groomed by the Group HR Director, Fazalele Tshiqi, Philip de Weerdt (former Rigid Plastics group executive), and Chris Brink."

In the year ahead David and his team will continue to focus on getting all the business units of the division into standalone profit centres. "Gone are the days when one business could cross-subsidise another for an indefinite period and hope to survive," he states. "Each of our businesses must demonstrate its ability to perform optimally to produce a return that is sustainable and shows the potential of growing as we are duty-bound to improve shareholder value.

In the short term, the focus will fall on cost, quality, leadership, organisational and technical alignment, as well as market preparation. ‘But we’ve already prepared ourselves to thrive as a business in the 2020s by focusing on new market expansion, customer solutions, and technical advancement.’ he declares proudly.

Basics and beyond Part of the journey will take the division back to basics. ‘Great processes and best operating practices exist broadly within the organisation, but the execution thereof needs great attention.” Conversely, some of the old must make way for the new and David and his team remain alert to international trends where modern technology and practices offer a distinct competitive advantage”

Packaging is not for the faint-hearted," he insists. "We strive to maintain a standard of quality in service and products that make us an attractive option to our customers, albeit that we do not present ourselves as the cheapest ‘on the block’.

The strong drive for greater environmental awareness and accountability regarding the disposal of packaging waste also affects decision making. “We have to play our part and have for many years adapted the concept ‘cradle to grave’, wherein we ensure that waste ends up in landfills. Many companies are opting for one-way packaging and this has a negative impact on packaging sales.” With new technology, new types of packaging are entering the market and threaten to make the current packaging obsolete. "Our objective is to move with the trends and offer the market innovative packaging through our technical partner abroad. New technology offers further lightweighting of closures and crates, which improves cycle time during manufacturing and leads to increased output and capacity," he advises. "It’s a task that requires ongoing communication to keep everyone aligned and David feels up to it. "I believe in over-communicating, to the point that if the most junior position within the organisation understands what it is we are working towards. I have every confidence that by unlocking the huge potential of synergy from within our workforce, we can rise to be on par, if not greater, than our international counterparts or rivals. I have a vision of a workforce joined together with a spirit so clearly defined, that we will be unstoppable in becoming the best in what we do – Solution Driven Packaging Legends.”

What’s on your bucket list?

• Revise the BCM I left incomplete so many years ago.
• Do an MBA
• Take a six-week vacation to the East exploring the many islands on matriculate.
• Watch a Manchester United soccer match at Old Trafford with my son, Luke.
• Shark cage dive with my daughter, Catherine.
• Spend three months island hopping all over the Mediterranean with my wife, Martina. “She is one-cock kind!”

From the brotherhood: Features of a good MD

• True people skills and a good head for numbers.
• A calm disposition in challenging times.
• A leader who stands up for his team while firmly mentoring them to deliver their best.

From the heart: Change starts within

For the last 31 years David has been an active minister of the New Apostolic Church, where participation in uplifting the sick and poor and the overall disadvantaged within society is actively encouraged. "I was always first up to pledge commitment to assist or lead the crusade to do well. My greatest life learnings was always first up to pledge commitment to assist or

David’s life lessons

A man on his death bed reflected on his life. When he was in his 20s he wanted to have an influence on the world. In later years, having not achieved this, he turned his ambitions to influencing his country. Failing in this as well, he focused on his neighbourhood and later only on the road he lived in. After no success, he turned to his family who also rejected his effort to force conformance upon them. Now, as an old man in his 80s, he realises all he needed to do was to influence change within himself firstly and his family would have willingly conformed, and possibly the road, neighbourhood, country. Then he could ultimately have made his mark on the world.

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From life’s road map: Travel the detours

David is living proof that life does not work out as planned, nor do you necessarily follow the career path you thought you would travel. When he scored the highest marks in Woodwork at school he felt he would be never destined to take up a desk-bound occupation. "Then, for the best part of my career, I sat behind a desk with a computer as the only ‘tool’ in hand! Having thus landed in a job, not necessarily by my own design, I nonetheless felt that I was always moving forward. I guess nonetheless felt that I was always moving forward. I guess

By breaking the gap by Guy Charlton

The eyes that lit our lives: a tribute to Steve Biko

The leader who had no title

M-Afrika

by Andile

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Computers are one of the hazards that we should take note of. While computers will not permanently damage the eyes, they can cause strain or exacerbate existing eye conditions.

**Eyestrain**

Eyestrain is a type of repetitive strain injury (RSI) that is caused by insufficient rest periods and incorrect working conditions. Glare is a common cause of eyestrain – whether it is direct or indirect. Direct glare is where light shines directly in your eyes; whereas indirect glare is caused by light reflecting off surfaces into your eyes. Glare often results from computer screens being too dark or too bright. Because your eyes have to struggle to make out the images on the screen, glare leads to eye muscle fatigue.

Another major cause of eyestrain is the position of the computer screen. Your eyes are naturally positioned so that they look straight ahead and slightly down. If your computer monitor is positioned incorrectly, the eye muscles must constantly work to hold the eyes in the correct position to view the monitor. To prevent your eyes becoming strained in this way, the top of your computer screen should be no higher than eye level.

**Dry eye syndrome**

Using your computer correctly can also help to prevent dry eye syndrome. Dry eye syndrome is a condition in which the eyes become inflamed due to a lack of tears. This lack of tears is commonly due to a blockage of the oil-secreting glands in the eyes. Although this condition causes discomfort, it does not usually affect vision.

### Ways to minimise damage to your eyes caused by computer screens

- Set up your computer screen so that it is in the correct position in relation to your eyes. The top of the screen should be in line with your eye level and the screen should be placed at least 45cm from you.
- Tilt the screen slightly back 10-15 degrees so that you do not receive glare from lights in the ceiling.
- Glare can also be avoided by placing blinds over nearby windows, or using a glare screen.
- Blink more frequently. Blinking is important as it washes your eyes in their naturally therapeutic fluids.
- Take breaks from looking at your screen. One easy way to remember this is to think of 20-20-20: every 20 minutes you should try to look at something 20 feet away (6m) for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- It is also recommended to take breaks from your screen altogether every two hours.

### Screen Sirens

1. Don’t view your screen at an angle, or turn or tilt your head.
2. Avoid any glare on the screen.
3. Adjust the brightness of the screen and the size of text for comfort. You shouldn’t be squinting, straining or leaning toward the screen.

### Monitor screen time

If you look at a computer for more than three hours a day you may experience symptoms such as:

- Eye discomfort
- Headaches
- Itchy eyes
- Dry or watering eyes
- Burning sensations
- Changes in colour perception
- Blurred vision
- Difficulty focusing

### Information sent by Lois Spies, tax manager at Nampak Management Services.