



FOR PROFESSIONALS  
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## TIPS FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TO MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR YOUTH

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*10 February 2015:* The 2014 World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Risk Report estimates that there are about 600 000 unemployed graduates in South Africa. These statistics highlight the challenges that many young professionals face when trying to enter the job market and the importance of planning and goal-setting to ensure a successful career.

This is according to John Marsden, National Sales Director at PPS, the financial services provider focused on graduate professionals, who says that despite having a degree, young professionals may experience some difficulties finding employment when they leave university. “This group needs to plan ahead and understand that they will have to work hard to prove themselves within the working world.”

While young professionals may not have the work experience that their older peers have, Marsden says that they should use their youth as an advantage to be innovative, creative and utilise opportunities for personal growth within the professional environment.

Marsden provides the below tips for young graduates who have just entered the workforce and want to make a success of their new careers.

#### **Know what you want in life**

Everybody has an idea of the perfect life that they want to live. It is important for young professionals to envision where they want to go in life, know what their aspirations are and identify what they want to achieve. Also understand what you need to do or even sacrifice in order to reach your goals.

Marsden says that by writing down personal and professional goals, you develop an increased consciousness of what your mission in life is and as a result, will always be ready to seize every opportunity to realise that goal.

#### **Explore new skills and capabilities**

Society creates a lot of pressure on young professionals to be perfect and this type of mind-set may prevent this group from taking the necessary steps for attaining their goals.

“Instead, young professionals should focus on discovering what it is that they most enjoy doing. They must explore what the profession entails and has to offer and also pay attention to which skills they like more, excel at, or would like to acquire,” says Marsden.

#### **Don't procrastinate and take necessary risks**

Marsden says that young professionals should never procrastinate, but rather use their time wisely.

“During your 20s you are also able to take greater risks – within reason – that could help you achieve any goals that you may have. The beauty about this time is that you are able to make riskier decisions and, even if they don't work out, you can continue to move forward in your career,” he adds.

This time also allows you to be more flexible with the options provided to you, says Marsden. “If you need to make a few sacrifices in the beginning - such as working a few extra hours - it might pay off in the end as you may progress quicker in the workplace.”

## **Identify with a role model**

While it is wonderful to have multiple passions in life, Marsden advises that it is very important to make critical life choices during this time of your life in order to help you achieve success. “Young professionals should identify with an older person that they admire, look at the sacrifices that they have had to make in order to attain their goals, and determine whether they are willing to make the same sacrifices in their career.”

## **Define your values**

Marsden points out that people are inundated on a daily basis with messages from various mediums about how we should look, conduct ourselves and how we should live our lives. “While you are young you should define what you believe in, what you value in life and what legacy you want to leave behind - and strengthen these values throughout your life.

“Young professionals in their 20s are in the prime of their lives. This is the perfect time to establish what path they want their lives to follow and take every possible opportunity to reach their personal and professional goals,” says Marsden.

He adds that young professionals should also make use of online tools to search for possible job opportunities. A good example of this is the recently launched *PPS Professionals Connect* career portal, a collaboration between specialist associations, universities and experienced professionals which allows graduates to review a number of job vacancies across a number of professional fields. Visit [www.professionalsconnect.co.za](http://www.professionalsconnect.co.za) for more information.