

# From a love for numbers to a thriving career as a CA

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For Lazola Momo, three things have always been a given: his natural ability with numbers, a love for what he is good at, and the willingness to follow it and see where it takes him.



He'll tell you why it's worthwhile. "If you stick with what you love, and know and understand your profession, it will lead to opportunities. Maybe these are not opportunities that happen immediately. But in some time, they will. It all comes back."

He knows this – he's lived it. And it's happening to him again.

As the Chairperson of the Western Cape Division of ABASA (Association the Advancement of Black Accountants in South Africa), it's his job to provide outreach and support to students of accounting at schools and universities in the province. One way he and ABASA do this is by hosting an annual fundraising dinner, where sponsors donate money that goes toward scholarships for accounting students. And this year, one of the donors is an entity that played a huge role in his past – Milpark Education.

"It's so funny," he says, "because I did my CA through Milpark's CA Connect programme. When was it, 12, 13 years ago? And now they are back in my life again."

Milpark Education is not the only institution that returned to Lazola. ABASA itself did, too.

"I first joined ABASA when I was at Nelson Mandela University. Then I left Qqeberha to do my articles in Cape Town. But I heard about the ABASA Western Cape Division while I was doing my articles at AGSA (Auditor-General of South Africa)."

It was a busy, prosperous time for him. Alongside doing his articles at AGSA and being involved with ABASA, Lazola was also studying part-time through CA Connect. He credits Milpark with helping him to attain his CA – something he had been struggling to do.

"In my postgraduate studies at a different institution, I failed my exams, not once, but twice. I had no idea what was going wrong. I was studying exactly the same as I did in my undergrad, and back then I passed everything fine. But I learned something incredibly important when I came to CA Connect – which is that sometimes you need to change the way you do things if you want to succeed."

And that's what he did. And when the exams finally came around for the CA? It was intense. They were difficult. But he got

his qualification in the end.

This is why in his current role, Lazola is so keen to provide the same level of support that he received during his time with Milpark to other students embarking on a career in accounting.

“For anyone taking this path, it’s a challenge. And you need a solid support system in order to succeed – the environment is so important to whatever you need to do. You can’t put a fish on the ground. At Milpark, the setting, maybe subconsciously, motivated us. We got the encouragement, the contact classes, the focus and attention we needed, the nuggets of wisdom that we could take forward.”

Lazola’s impact on others also extends beyond the young South Africans in accounting he encounters in his work with ABASA, to those he works with and services through his work in Cape Town’s public sector. Formerly a senior manager with CapeNature, he has held several roles in the public sector of the City of Cape Town and is now the head of monitoring and reporting in the City.

“I always wanted to work in the public sector,” he says. “I always believed, and still believe, that by working here, I can really make a difference and help people.”

For Lazola, it seems like this commitment to helping others may in fact be a fourth thing that has always been a constant for him: “It comes back. And now I must give it back,” he concludes.

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Milpark Education was established in 1997, becoming one of the first private providers of higher management education in South Africa. Milpark services the higher education needs of various corporate entities as well as public students, through the qualification offerings of four schools: the School of Professional Accounting (incorporating CA Connect), the Business School; the School of Commerce; and the School of Financial Services. It currently offers 23 accredited programmes in higher education.

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