

# MJ open doors to varsity students

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There are numerous South African industry names who cut their teeth at MJ Event Gear, many arriving at the Johannesburg-based rental company such as Tshwane University of Technology's students to complete their internship. This year, MJ have been pleased to welcome Albino Siteo and Lihle Mvumvu, third year students at the Tshwane University of Technology, who for three months have been exposed to training in live entertainment.

"It is very important for our lighting students to visit companies as this not only motivates and inspires them, but it also prepares them for their career and what to expect when they graduate," said Wandile Mgcodo, lecturer at Tshwane University of Technology's Department of Technology. The university is grateful to all the rental companies and suppliers who have partnered with students over the years.

Theo Rood, a director at MJ Event Gear as well as a former Tshwane University of Technology

student, remembers just how terrifying it was going through the process himself. He laughs, “My very first job was preparing parcans for a Toto concert in 1997.” The band toured South Africa for the first time, eventually joining a South African choir and drum team to perform ‘Africa’ in Johannesburg. “My back was so sore from bending over and testing parcans all day!” he smiles. Having been part of a band at high school, Theo thought he was destined to be a sound boy, but as time went on he found the light, and his interpersonal skills with clients have made him an asset to the company.

The Tshwane University of Technology students at MJ Event Gear are coached to do everything from maintenance, lighting, staging and audio. “I recommend the internship as it’s beneficial for the students, the university and our company,” said Theo. “From experience, I know that you can only learn so much from books. The students usually joined us in our silly season at the end of the year, and it’s a rough three months. I always tell them if they can make it through this they will go a long way. Albino and Lihle have been stunning.”

Lihle Mvumvu is grateful for the opportunity. “I have gained experience in terms of rigging and lighting, and this is going to be my industry,” he enthusiastically commented.

Albino Siteo agrees. “It has been a nice experience. At first it was hard to adapt as at Tshwane University of Technology there is not as much equipment and we are now working in a live environment. Despite the long hours, I’m enjoying it.” He adds that the way MJ Event Gear prep gear is a winning formula. “It makes things easier, knowing your gear is clean and ready for hire.”