

Dr Joseph Sekhampu



*“Authentic leadership is the key to unlocking the full potential of both the leader and their team...”*

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## *Passionate about knowledge and skills transfer*

For most of his working life, the chief director of the Business School at North-West University (NWU), Dr Joseph Sekhampu has been in academia.

"I think I have always wanted to be in academia – as it enables me to use the space to write about socio-economic challenges of small communities such as where I come from," says Dr Sekhampu



**Dr Joseph Sekhampu** : Chief Director NWU Business School

Dr Sekhampu who joined the business school in January 2023 spent the last nine years of his career as head of the school of commerce and chief operating officer at Milpark Education.

Born in the Free State and schooled in the small town of Ficksburg, he obtained his undergraduate degree at the former Vista University in Sebokeng. He is a NWU graduate with MCom and PhD in Economics.

On completion of his Masters degree, he kicked off his career as a student graduate at Standard Bank in Johannesburg where he worked at various departments in corporate and retail banking.

He transitioned to academia joining NWU Vaal as a PhD student and lecturer, as well as co-ordinating elements of the first-year Economics program at the institution.

As facilitators of knowledge and skills transfer to current and future leaders – the business school's teaching, research and engagement activities should produce graduates who are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute positively to the growth and development of the economy, he explains.

NWU Business School collaborates with industry partners to gain insights into emerging trends, skills requirements and talent needs.

The alumni network informs the school's curricula and learning approach based on success stories.

Furthermore, the school hosts networking events called Pitsos – a Setswana word which means the gathering of people to discuss business-related topics and share knowledge and experiences.

Dr Sekhampu is excited about the potential benefits of the South African Business Schools Association (SABSA), and is looking forward to learn from experienced leaders.

*You have to surround yourself with people of the same mindset – one of learning, but also of sharing, of teaching.*

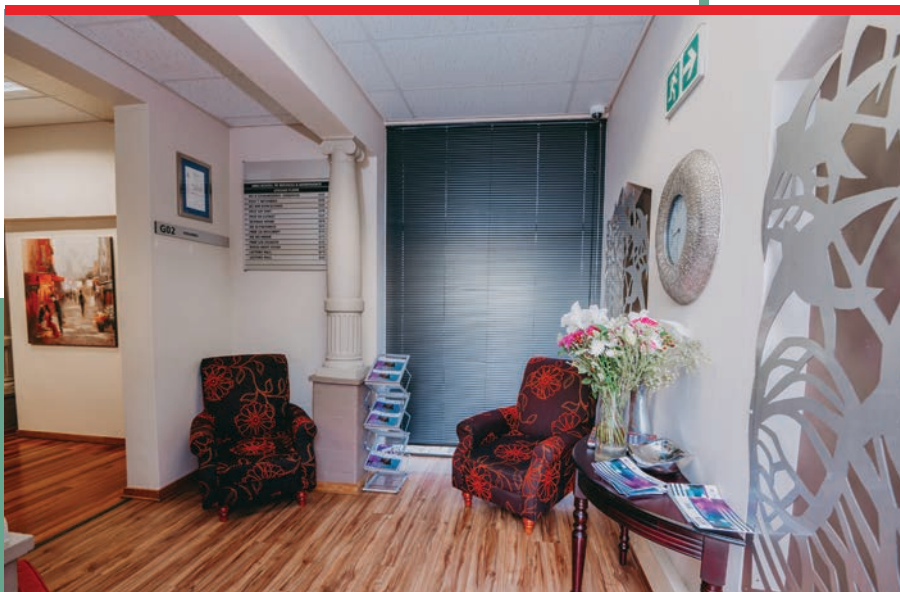
~ Dr Joseph Sekhampu



## Mentorship

Dr Sekhampu says effective leadership is a cornerstone of success, and to this end, he will continue to hone his leadership skills to become a better and more effective leader.

“Authentic leadership is the key to unlocking the full potential of both the leader and their team, hence I intend being authentic, and lead the team with integrity, transparency and purpose,” he says.



A firm believer in mentorship and the positive impact of role models in career and personal development, he says Prof Tielman Slabbert has been one significant role model in his career.

They met during his second year at the former Vista University and also supervised his doctoral studies. His commitment to humility and service has inspired Dr Sekhampu to lead with empathy and compassion.

He has been fortunate to have several mentors throughout his career and drew inspiration from academic and business leaders who have demonstrated the importance of ethical leadership and responsibility.

“Engaging with these leaders has taught me to prioritise collaboration, inclusion and authenticity in my approach to leadership,” he points out.

Dr Sekhampu says experienced executive, prolific leadership writer, author of *Blazing a Trail* and CEO of Lesaka Technologies, Lincoln Mali is an inspiration. “Mali’s commitment to ethical leadership, and ethos of embracing the best values, principles, and ethics and being exemplary in everything you do is a powerful message that resonates with me.”

## Setting the tone

From a work perspective, he would like to ensure that the business school retains its relevance and sustainability.

Dr Sekhampu says the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic is one the challenges facing business schools. The global pandemic accelerated online learning and highlighted the need to invest in technology and infrastructure to support new teaching methods.



The rapidly changing workplace demands a new set of skills that traditional academic programs may not provide. The business school landscape is constantly changing, competition is stiff with new market entrants and established institutions vying for market share.

“To remain competitive, business schools must establish unique market positioning to distinguish themselves. At NWU, we intend building a strong brand recognised for quality education through the re-imagined physical and digital footprint.”

Fostering stronger relationships with local businesses and industry collaborations will enable the development of relevant curricula and executive education training programs so that graduates have the necessary skills to meet workplace demands.

He says the school will prioritise quality over quantity to attract and retain talent. By so doing, NWU will maintain high academic standards and ensure its research is relevant and beneficial to businesses in Africa in selected fields like entrepreneurship among others.

Dr Sekhampu says through incorporating remedial actions in the curricula, the school will be able to bridge the soft skills such as problem-solving, emotional intelligence, communication and teamwork, as well as technical skills like data analysis and digital literacy.

“If we successfully implement these tactics, NWU Business School will remain competitive and recognised as a leading institution in the region,” he says.



## Technology

In a fast moving and changing environment with technology advances such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), Dr Sekhampu explains that these tech tools are critical in shaping the future of business and society. Embracing technology is no longer a nice-to-have, but must-have business and life skill.

He says the business school is in the process of considering curriculum implications to determine how best to increasingly incorporate elements that focus specifically on emerging technologies.

“We will work hard to incorporate new learning tools to enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes while equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills to thrive in an ever-changing landscape.”

During the pandemic and subsequent lockdown restrictions, the business school transitioned to online learning to ensure continuity.

Technology facilitated virtual classrooms and other digital learning resources, and assessment methods

were changed to suit online learning. Investments into exploring the hybrid model – attending classes in person and remote online learning means students have flexible and learning experiences suited to their individual needs.

## Lasting legacy

At the end of his tenure at the school, Dr Sekhampu wants to be remembered for his commitment to ensuring NWU Business School remains at the forefront of shaping leadership minds, and find innovative solutions that are beneficial for businesses in Africa.

With the world becoming a digital village, he says it is important to provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the new environment.

“By leveraging the latest technologies, I believe that we can create an even more engaging, immersive, and interactive learning experience for our students, while also preparing them for the realities of the modern business world,” he adds.



## Quick fire questions:

a. **What are you reading right now?**

This Is Marketing by Seth Godin,

b. **What book (fiction, non-fiction, business) had the greatest impact on you?**

While going on a trip to Norway as an exchange student, I bought *Becoming a Leader* by Myles Munroe –one of the best decisions I’ve ever made.

c. **Who is your personal hero?**

My grandmother. Her sense of calmness and humility shaped the person I am today.

d. **Where will I find you on a typical Saturday morning?**

Spending time with the family. As the designated Uber driver for the family – I think a big “Family Transporter” sticker for my car is in order.