

# Careers

## My Brilliant Career

# Curiosity about electricity sparks a lifelong calling

### What does a service sales specialist do?

As a service sales specialist, I am responsible for the sale of medium-voltage and low-voltage service products in South Africa and selected sub-Saharan countries (Botswana, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo).

The service products include retrofits, upgrades and extensions. In my role, I assist customers by helping them understand their pain points and providing them with suitable solutions to improve the availability of their equipment and its safety for operators.

My typical day would include going to a customer site, capturing the customer's equipment information, and having a conversation with them to understand what they would like to achieve or what issues they now face.

We would then discuss possible solutions regarding how to fix their issues and improve their equipment safety, as well as how it operates.

My other responsibility is to market our service through various channels.

### Gaopalelwe Jabane is a service sales specialist at ABB South Africa

#### How did you end up doing the work you do?

After completing an electrical engineering national diploma, I started working for a petrochemical company, where I gained all the necessary technical experience and knowledge. I then joined ABB ELDS as a graduate in their sales division, where I learnt about sales-related processes. I was then appointed service sales specialist. From a sales point, I understand the issues customers face with their equipment and help to provide them with tailor-made solutions.

#### What do you think makes you good at the work you do?

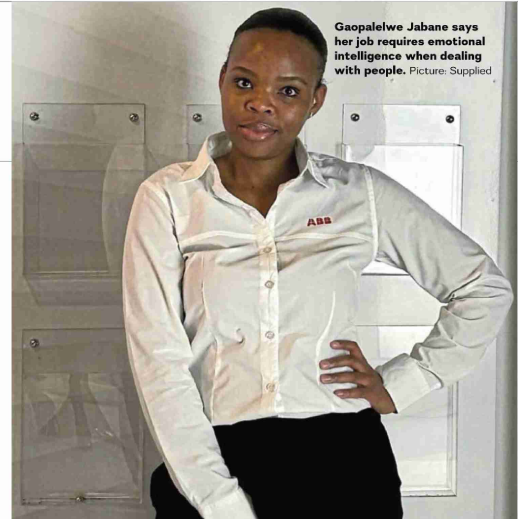
I have technical knowledge and experience but, most importantly, I have the personality and attitude required for this job. I work well with people and am very accountable. In a sales job, you must be able to work well with different kinds of people.

#### What would people find surprising about your work?

People are often surprised that a sales job requires a technical qualification and experience. Some people think it's just an administrative job.

#### What do you find most challenging about the work you do?

One of the challenging things about this job is that you meet different people with different personalities, and some can be pushy and difficult. It's important to have emotional intelligence so you can manage your emotions as well as other people's. It is also a demanding job – there is a lot of travelling to see customers and a lot of administrative work that falls behind sometimes,



Gaopalelwe Jabane says her job requires emotional intelligence when dealing with people. Picture: Supplied

which is when the work-life balance becomes difficult.

#### What did you want to be when you were a child?

I wanted to be a teacher. I admired my grade 1 teacher, Mrs MATHOLA, at Maanoane Primary School in Zeerust. She was sweet, always encouraging the whole class. We loved her. I then grew older and started becoming curious about how the TV and the lights were powered. I wanted to understand why we had to save electricity. I just wanted to know how this magic happened, which sparked the interest that led to me to

where I am today.

#### What advice do you have for the matriculants of 2023?

You are young and have a bright future ahead of you. You are responsible for your studies if you have made it to a tertiary education institution. Ask lots of questions when you don't understand, and seek help when you need it. If you didn't go to a tertiary institution, there are also lot of options like learnerships that will also give you experience and qualifications. Find a mentor – someone who can guide you to reach your full potential.