Beyond The Tracks: Daanyaal Dunn

INTRODUCING: Daanyaal Dunn, Junior Project Controller

Starting Out and Progression

MEET Daanyaal Dunn, a Junior Work Package Controller based at Midrand corporate office. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) in Finance and Bachelor of Commerce Honours (BCom Hon) in Financial Planning from the University of Johannesburg(UJ). “I joined Gibela in April 2024 as a Financial Controller Intern, where I gained valuable experience in project-based financial work. Over time, I developed a strong interest in the operational and planning side of projects. After the completion of my internship, I was offered the Junior Work Package Controller position. Being offered this position proved to me how much the organisation valued my growth. My role combines structure, problem-solving, and collaboration — which aligns with both my skills and ambitions,” he said.

Balancing Professional Life and Social Life

Daanyaal strongly believes that balance come from the planning structure one creates for themselves. “I work a full-time job, train regularly in boxing, and also run a successful barbering business on the side. To manage everything, I plan ahead and stick to routines. I’ve learned to be strict with my time — when I’m at work, I focus fully on my work duties; when I’m training or cutting hair, I give that the same level of attention. Spending time with my fiancée, family, and close friends is also a non-negotiable part of my week. It’s all about setting priorities and staying consistent. But above all, what truly keeps me grounded is my faith. As a devout Muslim, praising Allah (God) is an integral part of my daily life. The five daily prayers help structure my day, calm my mind, and realign me with what really matters. No matter how busy or stressful life gets, taking those moments to remember Allah brings peace to my heart and clarity to my mind.” he shared.

Overcoming Challenges

A key challenge for Daanyaal is coordinating between various teams while ensuring project timelines, budgets, and deliverables stay aligned. “Things can change quickly in this environment, and you have to be on your toes. I overcome this by staying proactive, organized, and detail oriented. I communicate clearly and ask questions when I need clarity. I’ve also found that staying calm under pressure and focusing on solutions helps me tackle even the most difficult situations effectively,” he reflected.

The Journey & Experience at Gibela

While reflecting on his journey and experience at Gibela, Daanyaal said “what I enjoy the most is knowing that my work contributes to large-scale infrastructure that helps move the country forward, it is meaningful and motivating. Gibela has supported my growth by recognizing my potential. When I received an offer elsewhere, they didn’t hesitate to promote me — which was both encouraging and empowering. They’ve given me opportunities to take on more responsibilities and develop within the business, and that kind of trust pushes me to continue evolving. There isn’t one single moment that stands out – instead, it’s the consistent feeling of being trusted with new responsibilities that’s most rewarding.

Every time I’m handed a new task or challenge, it feels like recognition of growth and potential. That ongoing trust and responsibility is what motivates me to keep pushing forward.”

Future Aspirations

”Professionally, I want to grow into the field of project management. I plan to get certified and fully embrace that path one day — managing larger scopes, leading teams, and overseeing projects from start to finish. I enjoy structure, planning, and execution, so project management aligns perfectly with how I think and work. Personally, I want to build a meaningful and faith-centred life with my fiancée. I want to continue growing spiritually, keep improving my boxing skills, expand my barbering brand, and just keep showing up as the best version of myself — in every role I play. Ultimately, I want everything I do to reflect excellence, sincerity, and gratitude to Allah (God),” said Daanyaal.

Instilling Values

“Daanyaal is a proud older brother to two beautiful sisters— one in university, and the other in primary school(Grade 4). “Being the older brother, I take that responsibility seriously, I try to be a role model in both actions and words. Whether it is through how I carry myself at work, how I treat others, or how I stay disciplined in my daily life, I know they are always watching and learning. I regularly check in with them, offer guidance, and encourage them to chase their goals while keeping faith at the centre. I remind them that no matter how far they go in life, success without good character and gratitude to Allah is empty. Even with a busy schedule, I make time for them — whether it's helping with decisions, schoolwork, or just having real conversations. I want them to know that they’re supported, and that they can look to me for strength, advice, and love,” he said.

One-Day CEO

“If Daanyaal had the opportunity to be in the shoes of Gibela’s CEO for one day, he expressed a few points he would focus on.

- Strengthen Cross-Departmental Collaboration:
- “One key area I’d enhance is how different departments coordinate and align their efforts. Sometimes timelines, responsibilities, or information can get lost between teams. I’d implement an integrated project coordination platform with real-time dashboards that all stakeholders can access — ensuring transparency, accountability, and smoother communication across departments. This would help eliminate bottlenecks and foster a more collaborative environment,” he expressed.
- Leverage AI to Support Technical Teams:
- “I’d champion the introduction of AI-driven support tools, especially for on-site teams like maintenance and production. Imagine a voice-activated chatbot that technicians can access via mobile or tablet to retrieve step-by-step repair guides, safety instructions, or part availability instantly. This would cut down time spent searching for manuals or waiting for approvals, making frontline operations more efficient and tech enabled,” he explained.
- Personalize and Gamify Employee Development & Recognition:
- “Since Gibela already does well in supporting development and recognition, I’d focus on personalization. I’d introduce tailored learning paths based on employee goals, role maturity, and interests — using AI to suggest courses, mentorships, or growth tracks. On the recognition side, I’d create a gamified internal platform where teams and individuals can earn real-time rewards for innovation, teamwork, punctual delivery, and upskilling —keeping motivation high and progress visible to all,” he shared.

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