#### JULY, 2023 - VOL. 7

# singular systems simplifying complexity NEWSLETTER



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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the latest edition of our quarterly newsletter! We hope it finds you all in good health and warmth, especially considering the unprecedented weather we experienced in Johannesburg recently - snowfall graced our city for the first time in 12 years, reminding us of the magical and unexpected nature of life.

Times have undeniably been tough, with escalating food prices, loadshedding and water outages. However, amidst these challenges, we remain steadfast in upholding our core values of Integrity, Fairness, Care, Collaboration, Gratitude, and Excellence.

We have seen many examples of this over the last quarter, but none more heartwarming and profound than the touching tribute to our dear colleague, Hloriso, highlighting the genuine connections we forge and the impact we have on one another's lives at Singular.

In this newsletter, we will explore how our core values shape our actions and the positive impact they have on our people, our clients, our partners, and the wider community.

Enjoy!

# NEW TEAM MEMBERS

It has been a pleasure welcoming our newest members of the Singular team. We are delighted to have you on board and we are confident that your skills, expertise, and diverse perspectives will contribute immensely to our collective success. Thank you for choosing Singular!

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Cape Town Rainier van Niekerk Engineering Manager: DevOps





## LONG SERVICE RECOGNITION

We would like to take a moment to extend our congratulations and heartfelt appreciation to our longserving employees. We are grateful for their loyalty and dedicated service to Singular over the years. To Eric who is leaving us and moving on, we wish him all the best in his future endeavors. Thank you for being part of our journey.







Theodorah

Ndlovu

Roger

Fuller-Good

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Eric

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Mugo

Nelisiwe

Thabile

Khumalo

Matumba

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Sheila

Ndebele

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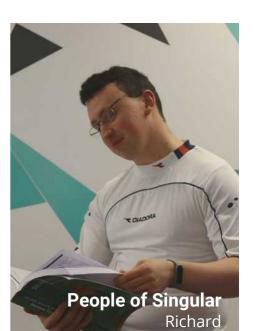


Singular is buzzing with baby joy! Kyle Dutton became a first-time dad in Cape Town, welcoming little Lexi Lee. Pierre Van Niekerk celebrated the arrival of his adorable baby boy, Rikus Miguel. Meanwhile, in Johannesburg, Tjaard Prinsloo parenthood joined the club, welcoming his baby boy, Eben.

Singular sends а massive congratulations to all the proud parents! Get ready for sleepless nights and tons of heart-melting moments. Enjoy every second of this wild adventure with your tiny humans.



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# **KUDOS**

- Kudos to the Stanlib team, the client has been greatly appreciative of our contribution to closing out the first quarter. A special thanks was given to Gavin Douglas-Hamilton and Jack Strauss for collaborating with the client's SQL team to drive excellent results. - Kaashief Hartley
- Huge Kudos to Nick Hodgson and Bruce Wilson for winning the redev of DDS. DDS has been a client of Singular's for around 20 years and their system has been aging. Nick and Bruce have been working on them for a while to push them for a rewrite in our modern technology stack. We finally got the signed contracts from them last week. This is a massive achievement because it not only allows DDS to simplify, derisk and modernize their current system, but allows Singular to train additional people on their business and to slowly replace the older technologies currently being used in their platform. This goes a long way to solidify the trust that DDS have always placed in Singular as their technology partner and set us up for another 20 years of working together. Well done Bruce and Nick, I am really happy that your efforts have been rewarded and Singular has landed yet another big project for our 2024 year! - Brendon Webber



## **KUDOS**

"Thank you for a great job as always. I know I can always rely on this team to get the job done. Your efforts and dedication are always appreciated. I owe you guys a lunch - after Ramadhaan :)" - Farhad Safi

#### (SuperSport)

- Yet another WOHOOOO and THANK YOU from Supersport aka Sober singing Tjaart Prinsloo and Taariq T. Khan's praises. You guys are amazing and messages like these from clients definitely gives me the warm and fuzzies. Thanks for always giving your all and more to this client - we appreciate you and all the effort you put into keeping this client happy and smiling and staying on as a client. Julle is AWESOME!!! - Shani
- Big thank you to Gregory Paddey as well as Nikki, Sean and Dale from Dalcom who are actively improving our security posture! Some important behind-the-scenes work has been done in the past few months to keep us going securely - a big thank you!! - JP Swart
- Big thank you to the superstars who have put their hands up to host training sessions in the upcoming months! Kelly Syrett, Keketso Mokorosi, Georgina Ballantyne, Alex Gous - JP Swart

## WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE

#### Miles Downard Executive: Head of Johannesburg

In today's remote digital age, it's easy to get caught up in the world of virtual communication. We can email, text, and video chat with clients from anywhere in the world, and it can be tempting to think that there's no need to ever meet in person.

However, there are a number of reasons why face-to-face meetings are still essential for maintaining client relationships. strong evidence Conversely, there's showing how a loss of this personal touch can lead to a breakdown of relationships.

#### **Building trust**

Trust is the foundation of any successful business relationship. And while it's feasible to build trust over email or video chat, it's much easier to do so in person. When you meet with a client face-to-face, you can build rapport and trust by shaking their hand, making eye contact, and reading their body language.

#### **Understanding their needs**

It's also easier to understand your clients' needs when you meet with them in person. You can see their office environment, get a feel for their company culture, and ask them questions about their business goals. This information will help you to tailor your services to their specific needs and ensure that you're providing them with the best possible value.

#### **Creativity and collaboration**

Face-to-face meetings are also more conducive to creativity and

collaboration. When you're in the same room with your clients, you can brainstorm ideas more constructively. I often find myself sitting on video calls where it's terribly obvious that attendees are busy with other tasks, paying little attention to the meeting itself. This erodes creativity and collaboration. Having everyone in the same room doesn't guarantee engagement but it certainly helps.

#### Personalisation

Finally, face-to-face meetings allow you to personalise your interactions with clients. You can grab a coffee together, show them appreciation, and simply take the time to get to know them better. This will make them feel valued and appreciated, which will strengthen your relationship with them.

As the saying goes, "out of sight, out of mind." If we don't make an effort to stay in touch with our clients in person, they're more likely to forget about us and our business. Just last week Nick and I met with the Share Trust team at Multichoice, where the client voiced concerns over us losing that personal touch with them and the negative impact that's having on our ability to service their needs effectively.

Singular has been built off the back of our ability to form relationships with people, thereby enabling us to build partnerships with our clients. If we want to continue to build trust. understand our clients' needs, be creative. collaborate. and personalise our interactions, then we need to make sure that we're



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meeting with them in person on a regular basis.

It doesn't have to be a long meeting, but it should be enough time to catch up, build rapport, and discuss any upcoming projects. By taking the time to meet with our clients in person, we'll be well on our way to maintaining strong relationships and growing our business.

## **GET TO KNOW SHEILA NDEBELE**

#### Office Administrator & Seamstress Extraordinaire Johannesburg

We sat down with Sheila for a quick chat about one of her many passions and favourite hobbies which is sewing. Sheila provided us with some great insight on what it takes to create garments and of course the satisfaction that comes with it.

# How old were you when you started sewing?

I started sewing in primary school around grade 4 and at the time we mostly focused on needle work since we did not have sewing machines. We mainly created small garments such as aprons. My mom was also a seamstress and had her own sewing machine at home which helped me learn how to sew using a machine.

In high school, I took up Fashion and Fabrics as a subject. We were assessed on how well we could create clothes using clothing patterns. It was around this time that I realised how good I actually was at sewing and how much I enjoyed the whole process of garment construction.

I eventually bought my own machine after working for a while and started creating my own clothes. I would look at a garment in a shop and think to myself, I can probably make this, then go home and give it a go.

# Is this different from being a fashion designer?

Yes, much different. Fashion design requires you to take up an actual course and go through the process of learning how to design a piece of clothing and to create the pattern required for the garment you want to make.

# Do you make garments for both men and women?

Men's garments are much harder to make and require you to at least take up a course in cutting and





### **KUDOS**

- A big thank you to Douglas Mabasa for getting the etfSA tax reporting out over the last few weeks. The client came to us with a challenge and a tight deadline and Doug stepped up to the plate and smashed it out of the park. Well done! - Chris Gibberd
- A big well done and kudos to the Nedbank ST team (Hilton Gallagher, Steven Fredman, Taariq T. Khan) for helping the client by solving a tax certificate problem at short notice. The team was not only able to help the client meet their deadline, but were also able to improve the existing process and cut down the required processing time from 22 hours to 38 minutes! All contributing to a very happy client! Well done and thanks for all the efforts Team! -Stuart Allcock

Massive shout-out to Mpho Kutoane - Over the past few weeks, she has been extremely helpful with any technical issues. Well done!!! - Franklyn Robinson (Salary

• Well done Mpho Kutoane. Great to get recognition like this from the client. Keep it up! - Nicolas Watson





## KUDOS

- Well done to Mamadise Thomo, Rickus Trollip and Ravi Vangala for getting a critical deployment over the line for the Finfit platform! Massive effort getting these changes live at 5am this morning to hit the deadlines required to configure the new Funder on the platform, Celtic bank! - Jayden Pienaar
- The team did a great job in making sure a release was done on time in the wee hours of last Thursday morning. Due to a number of both external and internal factors, the release was somewhat problematic with a few missed requirements and quality issues. While I am obviously concerned by some of the problems and I am busy working with the team to learn and improve, I want to give the team Kudos for how they responded when theses urgent issues were raised. We pulled together as a team and responded quickly with a clear plan followed by a number of hotfixes. We spent last Thursday afternoon/evening getting things back in order. I have found more often than not it's how you respond to these challenges that leaves the lasting impression! Well done, Mamadise Thomo, Rickus Trollip, Ravi Vangala, Ruan O'Neill,

design. The process is much more complex and is not easily doable by free-hand. I am more comfortable with making traditional shirts for men which are worn at weddings and cultural events. Women's clothing is much easier to make because I use my own garments as a reference. I also use YouTube for referencing.

# Do you get a lot of requests for garments?

I sometimes do get a lot of orders, especially during wedding seasons. Unfortunately, there are instances where I have to turn down a few due to time constraints. I try not to put myself under pressure. It's best to deliver to a client's satisfaction than to not deliver at all. It also helps to have someone you can refer clients to.

#### How long has it been since you started and what inspires to keep making garments?

It's been more than 30 years since I

started and the inspiration comes from the compliments I get from clients when they see the final product. There is a satisfaction that comes with seeing someone cherish and love something that you have created. I am also driven by the urge that comes with wanting to amend see mistakes on people's garments. This is why I always encourage people to come to me if they need help with clothing amendments.

# Have you considered teaching people the skill?

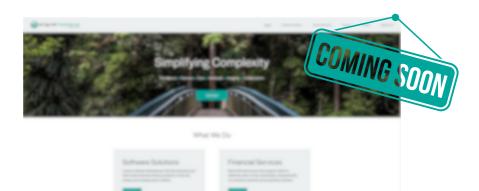
Not quite. I have taught a few people such as my friend's daughter. Teaching requires a lot of patience and it is something you need to have the passion for.

#### Is this something you will do fulltime once you retire?

Most definitely but it will also depend on how good my eyesight will be at that time because I will still need to thread needles.



# NEW SINGULAR WEBSITE





### **NEW PROJECTS**

#### **Financial Services**



Client Mahube Infrastructure Project Integrated Reports

IR won Mahube Infrastructure - who own infrastructure assets in the energy, transportation, water and sanitation sectors across Southern Africa. We were asked to assist with the CEO and Chairman's report for their integrated report.

Client Kumba Iron Ore Project Investor Relations Support

We also won Kumba Iron Ore as a retainer - one of the leading iron ore suppliers to the global steel industry. We will be providing

support for investor relations matters particularly around preparation for their interim and annual results.

#### Software Solutions



#### **Client Liberty**

**FY** Project DevSecOps Documentation

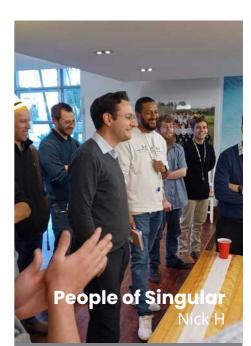
This project kicked-off in June as Rob joined, with the aim to work on Liberty as part of a project to document their DevOps and Release Management processes. The team working on it consists of Rob, Shani, Eric and Stewart Moss. We already have our foot in the door with the work Nick's Liberty team is working

#### Client Old Mutual Project Two Pot

Shani is the lone ranger on this project, in charge of bringing multiple segments in sync in terms of requirements, development, testing and the entire SDLC. She is working with Mohsen from the good ol' ABSA CRM days (almost 15 years on, and based on the amazing work they are doing, it was a relatively easy road to get the Release Management proposal approved. We are working closely with Johann Ries (a former "Singulite") in delivering this project that spans until the end of April 2024.

ago). This project has a tight deadline of 1 March 2024 due to regulatory requirements from the government around the Two Pot regulation.

Find out more about Two Pot.



## KUDOS

• Massive Kudos to the entire Liberty SSP team, who under great deadline pressures managed to bring all the pieces together and get us into the CI environment on schedule! This is a huge deliverable milestone to have hit and we couldn't have done it without a proper team effort. Stewart Moss, Dean Fouche, Georgina Ballantyne, Rodney Douglas, Siyabonga Hadebe, Swathi Neela, Benjamin Van Staden, Brett Bishop & Eric Mugo I'm extremely proud of all of you and what we've managed to pull together. The road ahead will present us with challenges I'm sure, but together I know we can achieve great things. Cannot tell you how awesome I think what we're creating together is and I'm super excited to see where we go from here! - Nick Hodgson





# WELLBEING RESOURCES AT SINGULAR

Camaf Emotional Wellbeing Programme Confidential programme to approach your emotional health through prevention and management

#### Camaf Wellness Club

Information and practical tools to equip you with the resources, knowledge and motivation to live a healthier, more productive life.

#### **Multiply Starter**

Free access to Multiply Starter (for Camaf members). This gives you access to discounts on Virgin Active and Planet Fitness gym memberships (up to 25% off), and more.

#### Sanlam Reality (SGR)

You have access to a set of valueadded benefits designed to make your life as easy as possible, including Trauma, Assault and HIV Assist, Legal Assist, and access to the Wealth Sense portal.

## IN MEMORIAM HLORISO THELEDI

#### Senior Consultant ShareTrust

Hlo started working for Singular on 1 December 2014 on a fixed term, and became permanent on 1 March 2015 working as a Share Dealer for the Financial Services Division before moving to the Walk-In Centre.

His wit, charm and dedication to hard work helped him climb up the ranks and he eventually ended up working for ShareTrust in the Outsourcing Division.

Hlo was more than just a colleague. He was a brother and a friend. He touched the lives of many with his warmth, great personality and

### kindness. His infectious enthusiasm uplifted our spirits and created an environment where everyone felt valued and supported. Whether it was a simple smile, an encouraging word, or lending a helping hand, Hloriso had an extraordinary ability to make those around him feel seen and appreciated.

Singular extends its deepest condolences to Hloriso's family and loved ones.

Rest in peace, dear friend. You will be sorely missed, but never forgotten.

## PROMOTIONS

Well done to every single person who has contributed to the ongoing success of Singular during the last performance cycle. Your effort does not go unnoticed and we appreciate you.

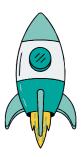
A special congratulations must go to the following employees on their recent promotions. We have enjoyed watching them take on their new roles and responsibilities with enthusiasm.



Johannesburg

Alex Gous Benjamin Van Staden Dean Fouche Ernest Mqcina Francesca Basopo Georgina Ballantyne Hilton Gallagher Jaco Van Zyl Kyle Chamier Leendert Van Der Bijl Mamadise Thomo Mpho Kutoane Nico de Jager Quintin Bennetts

Cape Town

Dayne Fortuin Garad Watkins Richard Peche Robin Munyoro Theodore Maja International Jayden Pienaar 

#### **Financial Services**

Camille Koudenoukpo Gloria Namane Jessie Ramakwetsane Lukhester Du Pont Moleboheng Lebakeng Nokthula Ntsibande Nomboniso Mokoena Sphiwe Magagula Thoriso Qholosha



# NAVIGATING AI: SHAPING PERCEPTIONS AND THE FUTURE OF JOBS

#### By Musa Mkhari and ChatGPT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an integral part of our lives, revolutionising industries and transforming the way we work. As Al continues to advance and its capabilities expand. people's perceptions about this technology play a crucial role in shaping its impact on jobs. In this article, we explore how people think about AI and how it can affect their employment prospects.

#### The perception of AI

The perception of Al varies among individuals, often influenced by personal experiences, exposure to media narratives, and levels of understanding. While some view Al as a disruptive force that threatens jobs and human labour, others see it as an opportunity for growth, increased efficiency, and innovation.

#### Fear and uncertainty

One prevalent concern is that AI will lead widespread to iob displacement. The fear of being replaced by intelligent machines looms large for many workers. This fear is fueled by news headlines predicting a jobless future where robots and algorithms take over human roles. Such concerns can anxiety and resistance create towards AI adoption in certain sectors.

However, it is important to note that historical precedents of technological advancements, such as the Industrial Revolution, have shown that while some jobs may be replaced, new ones are also created. AI has the potential to automate repetitive and mundane tasks, allowing humans to focus on higher-value activities that require creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence.

#### The power of collaboration

Al has proven to be a valuable collaborator rather than a direct competitor to human labour. Many businesses are embracing AI to augment human capabilities, creating a symbiotic relationship between man and machine. This collaborative approach enables employees to leverage AI tools to enhance their productivity, decisionmaking, and problem-solving skills. Industries like healthcare, finance, and manufacturing are witnessing the transformative power of AI, with human-AI partnerships leading to improved outcomes across various domains.

#### **Reskilling and upskilling**

To adapt to the changing landscape shaped by AI, individuals must recognise the importance of continuous learning and skills



# COACHING: MONEY BASICS FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

This session aims to provide young Singular professionals with basic financial knowledge to navigate the world of work successfully and make informed financial decisions. It covers key concepts and practical tips that are relevant to their financial wellbeing and long-term goals.

No investment product advice will be given.

Presented by: Kirstin Purves (Head of People and middleaged person who wishes someone had done a presentation like this when she first started out) When: Friday, 28 July at 11am Where: Teams



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People of Singular Kyle

# FRIDAY KNOWLEDGE LINKS

Joy is different from happiness!

How to beat procrastination

Should young people save less and spend more?

Ask the right questions to get a genuine response

Service Recovery Paradox

<u>Harvard knows what happiness</u> <u>is</u>

The grass isn't always greener

The Winner's Edge

False Urgency

Busy vs productive

Be a better human

development. Reskilling and upskilling become programmes critical to remain relevant in the job market. As certain routine tasks become automated, the demand for individuals skilled in areas such as data analysis, programming, cybersecurity, and AI ethics is on the rise. By embracing lifelong learning, individuals can harness the opportunities created by AI and stay ahead of the curve.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Al's impact on jobs also raises important ethical considerations. As AI systems become more sophisticated, the need for responsible and ethical deployment becomes paramount. Concerns regarding data privacy, algorithmic and bias. the potential for unintended consequences necessitate careful regulation and oversight. Society must engage in thoughtful discussions and establish frameworks to ensure that AI is deployed in a manner that benefits humanity as a whole.

#### In conclusion

As AI continues to evolve, people's perceptions about this technology will shape its impact on jobs. While fears of job displacement are understandable, history suggests that AI can be a collaborative partner that enhances human

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capabilities rather than replaces them. Embracing reskilling and upskilling opportunities, fostering collaboration between humans and AI, and addressing ethical concerns will be key to navigating the future of work successfully. By actively shaping the development and deployment of AI, we can harness its transformative potential to create a future where humans and machines work together harmoniously, driving innovation and prosperity.

#### Webinar



In this webinar Anchor Head of Private Capital Deon Katz will host the event with Anchor Fund Manager David Gibb taking the audience on a journey through the past, present and future of Al.



David Gibb Fund Management

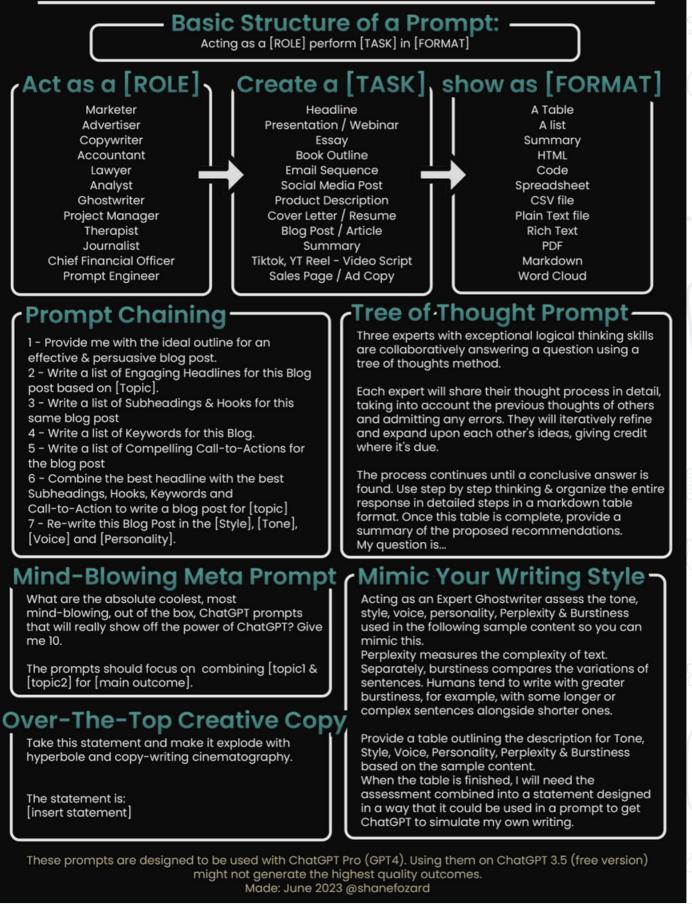
190

Deon Katz Private Capital

Date: Friday, 21 July 2023 Time: 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Platform: Zoom webinar Register <u>here</u>.



# The ChatGPT Cheat Sheet V2





## FINANCIAL SERVICES B-BBEE CAMPAIGN

# PHUTHUMA NATHI

The Financial Service department has launched a B-BBEE campaign for Phuthuma Nathi where the share scheme is looking for shareholders who have not received their dividends between 2006 and 2022. This campaign has reached shareholders through TV, radio and articles.

#### Read more about this:

Over R200m in Phuthuma Nathi dividends still unclaimed

<u>Claim your share of R200m in</u> <u>Phuthuma Nathi dividends</u>

Phuthuma Nathi is looking for shareholders who have not claimed their dividends



## DID YOU KNOW?

One of the breakaway rooms in our Johannesburg office is named after **Grace Hopper** who was an American computer scientist and mathematician. She received her master's degree and Ph.D. in mathematics from Yale and is known as one of the first three modern programmers.

She joined the U.S. Navy during World War II and was assigned to the Bureau of Ships Computation Project at Harvard University and worked under Howard Aiken. another computer pioneer, who had developed the IBM Automatic Sequence Controlled Calculator, better known as the Mark I, one of earliest electromechanical the computers. Hopper was responsible for programming the Mark I and punching machine instructions onto tape. She also wrote the 561-page user manual for the Mark I.

After the war had ended, she continued to work in computing and was key in helping develop a compiler compiler (a renders worded instructions into code that can be read by computers) that was a precursor to the widely used COBOL language. Though she did COBOL, Hopper not invent encouraged its adaptation.



As a research fellow at Harvard, she worked with the Mark II and Mark III computers and is sometimes given credit for the invention of the term

# REGISTER ON PAYSPACE

Remember to register on the Employee Self Service (ESS) portal at <u>https://www.payspace.com/</u> using your Singular email address.

Payslips are available to view and download after each payday.

Capture leave effective 1 July 2023 in both DT Express and ESS.

> Email any queries to payroll@singular.co.za





# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Join our quarterly newsletter team in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Financial Services.

We need your keen eyes to monitor noteworthy initiatives, achievements and events within your divisions, as well as your creative minds to share captivating stories through writing and photography.

A great sense of humour would be a distinct advantage!

Please get in touch with Kirst at kpurves@singular.co.za if you would like to get involved. "computer bug" which she did not actually author but rather popularised.

Hopper retired from the Naval Reserve in 1966 and was later recalled to active duty to tackle standardising communication between different computer languages. She remained in the Navy for 19 years and officially retired in 1986 at age 79 as the oldest serving officer in the service.

Read more about Grace Hopper.

# GRADUATE RECRUITMENT AND INTERNSHIP 2023

We were thrilled to have NWU participated in the and Rhodes University graduate career fairs, where we had the privilege of interacting with some exceptional students. These career fairs play an important role in our recruitment strategy, allowing us to showcase our company culture and attract top-tier talent from these fine institutions.

This endeavor resulted in the recruitment of eight talented young hopefuls into our 2023 internship programmes across Johannesburg and Cape Town, each of whom is eligible for placement at Singular in February 2024.

To our interns, your time with us has been brief but we hope that you embraced this opportunity, enjoyed the experience and forged new connections that will benefit you for years to come. We loved your energy and enthusiasm!











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Manu

# SOCIAL@SINGULAR







































# THE SWAG HAS ARRIVED

Exciting news! Our eagerly awaited company SWAG has arrived and is now ready for distribution.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to all employees who placed their orders and will soon be flying the Singular flag.

Your meeting us halfway on the cost helps us allocate budget to more important initiatives and benefits, while still giving employees the choice to acquire quality Singular branded items that they genuinely want and will use.

We kindly request your patience as we collate and package your orders.



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# YOUR OPINION MATTERS

We continue to look for ways to improve future content as we build the newsletter. What better way to make improvements than to hear from you the reader?

So please feel free to hit us up with any fresh ideas for content or features you would like to see in upcoming newsletters.

Email your feedback to: Sibusiso via smadonsela@singular.co.za or Musa via mmkhari@singular.co.za

If you'd like to get involved in our next edition, contact Kirstin at kpurves@singular.co.za





































