



singularsystems
simplifying complexity

NEWSLETTER



Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of the Singular newsletter. It comes off the back of a busy quarter and I hope that it accurately reflects our collective achievements and success during the period.

I have been reflecting on the last quarter and the overarching theme that has come through for me is Singular's unique ability to listen. In a world dominated by the constant chatter of social media, where everyone seems to be clamouring to make their voices heard, the art of listening is rare.

I am proud to say that Singular is a listening organisation. Listening is not just hearing words; it's about understanding, empathising, and valuing the perspectives of others.

Our commitment to listening shines through in

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many areas of Singular, not just in our ability to listen to clients. Contributions sessions are opportunities to listen to the aspirations and needs of our people so we can better support their growth.

My involvement in the recent performance appraisals (both individual appraisals and the performance reviews conducted by leadership after appraisals) has been incredibly humbling to witness. The effort, care and attention with which each and every individual in this business is discussed and considered is astonishing. Every single one of you matters and your career managers have your back, there is no doubting that.

Let's take a moment to appreciate the power of listening in a world that often seems too loud.

Kirst ■

Software Development: A Journey of Learning and Improvement

By Bruce Wilson

Software development is more than just technical skills and knowledge, it's about passion and a commitment to excellence.

Mastering the art of coding is similar to riding a roller-coaster blindfolded - it's both thrilling and terrifying, especially when you hit an internal server error or stack overflow exception.

The key to being a great developer is taking pride in what you are doing, a commitment to excellence continuously improving and helping your colleagues to improve.

Here are some high-level insights to software development:

THE TEN COMPONENTS OF A THINKING ENVIRONMENT

Attention - Listening with respect, interest and fascination.

Incisive Questions - Removing assumptions that limit ideas.

Equality - Treating each other as think peers: Giving equal turns and attentions and keeping agreements and boundaries.

Appreciation: Practicing a five-to-one ratio of appreciation to criticism.

Ease - Offering freedom from rush or urgency.

Encouragement - Moving beyond competition.

Feelings - Allowing sufficient emotional release to restore thinking.

Information - Providing a full and accurate picture of reality.

Place - Creating a physical environment that says to people, 'You matter.'

Diversity - Adding quality because of the differences between us.

Time to Think - Nancy Kline

when you write 10 lines of code without searching on Google



- **Don't be afraid to fail.** Embrace failure as part of the learning process, but try not to fail in production.
- **Leverage AI** for code analysis and review, test case generation and automation. Most importantly, understand what the code is doing and if it is the correct fit for what you are trying to achieve. AI is like having a mischievous sidekick, it writes code for you but might sneak in a few bugs where you least expect it. Proceed with caution and keep an eye out for AI's pranks.
- **Keep it simple.** A good design is simple, testable and well documented.
- **Customer focus.** Always put the customer's requirements first when designing and coding. You're there to solve their problems, not create new ones for them.
- Learn the fundamentals and not frameworks.

Frameworks come and go but the core principles remain the same and enable you to adapt to new frameworks as they emerge.

- **Become an expert in one area** whether it's back-end development, front-end development or something else.
- **Find a mentor.** Seek guidance from experienced developers to learn from their mistakes and avoid your own. Don't hesitate to ask for help.
- **Quality code.** Clean code, test coverage, and code reviews are essential for delivering high-quality software. Don't be afraid to put in the extra effort to make sure your code is top-notch.
- **Fast feedback loop.** Developers should be able to get feedback on their work quickly so they can make necessary corrections. This helps to ensure problems are caught early and don't snowball into bigger ones.

Software development can be a challenging job, but it is also an incredibly rewarding job. I hope these tips can help you to become a better developer and deliver high-quality applications that customers will love. ■



WHAT IS THE SECRET TO WRITING GREAT CODE?

There is no secret. It takes patience, practice, humility, learning and the willingness to learn from your mistakes. If you are passionate about what you do and are willing to put in the work you can be a great developer. - Bruce Wilson

KUDOS

Huge Kudos to [Kyle Chamier](#) for outstanding work. Historically, Richemont events are the most complicated. The client provided us with extremely limited information. Kyle was able to use that information to work backwards through 20 years of corporate and restructuring events to provide the client with information about their own holdings that they didn't know about. To be honest I was shocked it all balanced. Well done Kyle. It's the small things like this that make a huge impact at clients and further strengthens our partnerships with them! - **Mansur**

Thanks [Ruan O'Neill](#) and [Leendert Van Der Bijl](#) for continuously putting your hand up to support and strive to deliver excellence for Salary Finance. Your efforts are greatly appreciated both by Salary Finance and internally by the entire SF team. - **Jayden**



EQUITY EXPRESS
securities exchange

strate

Singular develops EESE-Converge integration for bond market launch

As EESE's software provider, Singular was tasked with developing the new bond integration between EESE and Strate's platform "Converge" (a platform managing over R70 billion worth of bonds).

The functionality developed enables EESE to list bonds cleared and settled through Converge, which was made possible when EESE's bonds licence was approved in March 2023.

From the Singular team a special mention must go to [Brendan Marlborough](#), [Alex Gous](#) and [Douglas Mabasa](#) who assisted in the development and delivery of the EESE-Converge integration.



On 1 September Equity Express Securities Exchange (EESE) was hosted by Strate, South Africa's principal central securities depository and central collateral platform, for a 'ringing of the bell' event to mark the launch of EESE's bond market.

NEW CLIENT & PROJECTS

Financial Services

ExecConnect: The Read Educational Trust

Vunani Ltd: Trading Channel

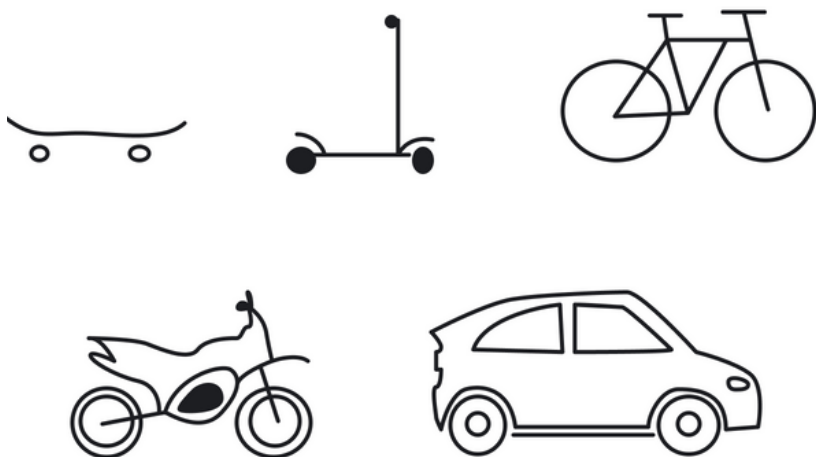
BoA / MLSA: Shareholder Tracing



Reimagining the Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

by Nic Watson

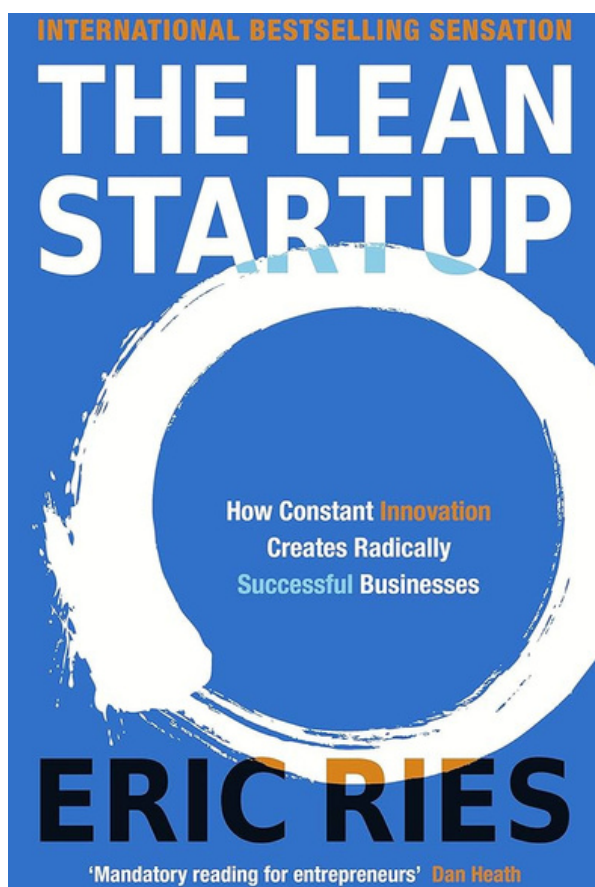
The term Minimum Viable Product (MVP) gets used frequently these days and, in my opinion, it is often used incorrectly. The problem here is that because it is used loosely, for any first phase of a project, it loses all its value as a concept. Our clients often ask for a Ferrari when they simply need a bicycle (and often only have the budget for a bicycle!). It is tempting to deliver the Ferrari, whether they need it or not, however every feature delivered that is not required



diminishes the value of what we deliver. Showing the client that all they need is the bicycle is often the most valuable thing we can do for them. And they will appreciate it and remember it. So, back to MVP's...

Eric Ries, author of the lean Startup, popularised this concept of spending as little time and money as possible on proving whether the product you wish to build will work. In my opinion, most business applications can and should be tested with an MVP that requires a few spreadsheets, emails, and people but no code (sometimes even no technology). For software dev shops this statement might feel a bit uncomfortable, but for problem solving solution providers, it's their bread and butter. The software serves as a means to an end, a way to scale the solution or make it more efficient, but it is not the solution itself. I challenge anyone to suggest a product or service that cannot be done manually for one user (except maybe blockchain decentralised ledgers which makes me question their innate business value...).

These days there is a whole host of tools that are designed for enabling the quick, low cost delivery of MVPs and I encourage all of us to explore them, especially the less technical among us. From my experience, forcing yourself to design and build a solution within low- or no-code constraints forces you to be creative and often results in elegant solutions. I have spent some time experimenting with low code applications such as Webflow, Airtable, Zapier, and Google Suite which are just a few of the big names in the low-code community.



I'm not suggesting that we at Singular should be proposing low-code solutions to our clients. I just think that we should always challenge ourselves in the solutions that we do propose. Is it the best value solution? The best way to answer this is to know which alternatives are out there, especially if there are quick, cheap ones available. If anyone is interested, I would be happy to discuss and show more of this. The latest example of which can be seen at hellostockpot.webflow.io

KUDOS

Kudos to the NeoLend team made up of [Michael Palmer](#) [Thiroshnee Moodley](#) [Hugh Rodseth](#) [Donald Chippendale](#) [Masibulele Msayi](#) [Kelly Syrett](#). We updated the UI and UX on our product, NeoLend, and deployed it to our client, Sanlam Private Wealth. The feedback from the client was overwhelmingly positive, see below. Well done, team! -

Kyle D

Massive Kudos goes to [Gregory Paddey](#), and the [Dalcom team](#) (Dale, Sean and Nikki). This team works tirelessly to keep our network and computers working, but they have recently gone above and beyond to switch our Internet over to our new provider, Metrofibre. Those rocking up in the JHB office may notice an improvement in our Internet speeds. We have jumped from 200Mbps to 500Mbps, with a sneaky 2nd 500Mbps on standby in case the 1st gives us issues (this is an active link that we plan to run our backups over so that the massive data we move for backup purposes does not...



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Rhodes Lectures

On Friday, 28 July, [Jono Maree](#) and [Kyle Dutton](#) joined Chris Upfold and the Rhodes University IS Honours class for a presentation on Knowledge Management in Software and Consulting Firms.

Jono and Kyle presented the various ways in which we retain and distribute learnings within Singular, with a focus on some of the apps and software we use. The session was interactive with many questions posed by students, and potential solutions put forward as to how we could utilise AI to better our knowledge management systems and processes.

Did you know?

[Charles Babbage](#) - "The father of the computer"

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Babbage>

One of our Johannesburg boardrooms is named after Charles Babbage, an English mathematician and inventor, credited with having conceived the first automatic digital computer which contained all the essential concepts found in the ones we use today.

Babbage studied at Trinity College Cambridge though



■ already self-taught in some parts of contemporary mathematics and it was around this time that he first had the idea of mechanically calculating mathematical tables.

In 1823, he obtained government support to design a projected machine, the Difference Engine, with a 20-decimal capacity. Like modern computers, it could store data for later processing.

In the mid-1830s Babbage developed plans for the Analytical Engine, the forerunner of the modern digital computer. He conceived the idea of a better machine that could perform not just one mathematical task but

WE HAVE A NEW WEBSITE

www.singular.co.za



KUDOS

...impact our lines, even during the early hours of the morning). This means that our Internet speeds in JHB have more than doubled!!! While our costs have actually decreased. The primary complication in the switch over is the change to Singular's public IP. Dalcom and Greg worked really hard this weekend to overcome the numerous obstacles thrown at them (including the generator not starting during load shedding!) to ensure we can all work efficiently over the new line from today. Of course, there may still be some gremlins, so if you encounter any issues that may be related to this, please let the team know asap so that they can get it resolved. From what I can see, everything seems to be working, so really well done! -

Brendon W

Huge Kudos to our Share Trust Team for the massive effort and commitment in successfully helping and enabling Naspers to implement their Corporate Action Instruction. This was a very complex requirement with a tight deadline impacting a lot of users across the Naspers Prosus Group. - **Stuart P**

any kind of calculation. It was intended as a general symbol manipulator and had some of the characteristics of today's computers. Unfortunately, the Analytical Engine was never completed as Joseph Clement, the machinist responsible for actually building the machine refused to continue working unless he was paid in advance for the build.

In 1991, British scientists built the Difference Engine No. 2, accurate to 31 digits to Charles' specifications. Their success indicated that his idea would have worked. In 2000, the printer for the Difference Engine was also built.

Babbage also assisted in establishing the modern postal system in England and compiled the first reliable actuarial tables. He also created a small calculator that could perform certain mathematical computations to eight decimals.

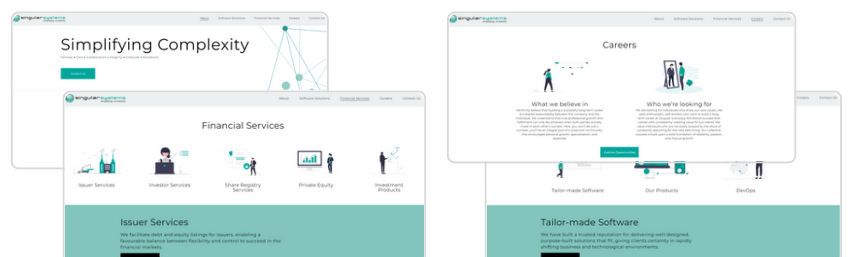
New Singular Website

We are thrilled to unveil our brand-new website, designed with a minimalist aesthetic while delivering clarity and conciseness about our core offerings: Software Solutions and Financial Services.

The primary goal with this redesign was to provide visitors with a streamlined and intuitive experience, and to give a tantalising glimpse into our offerings. Most importantly, we wanted to make it effortless for users to reach out to us.

We hope that you like it and are proud to share it with your networks.

Please send any content enhancement requests to [Kirstin Purves](#).





NEW JOINERS



Financial Services
Dakalo Mutshinya
ShareTrust Consultant



Johannesburg
Dwayne Meintjies
Software Developer



Financial Services Cooking Up a Storm

At the beginning of September the Financial Services management team sponsored a stand at client Abcon Group's annual potjie cooking competition. The competition is in aid of Abcon Group Foundation which drives Abcon's transformation strategy by providing B-BBEE advisory services and facilitating opportunities to invest in skills development and training, enterprise and supplier development and socio-economic development.

Battling against over 100 competitors Singular embraced this year's theme of 'South African Cultures' kitted out in green and gold and colourful prints. Potjie master Jeremy, ably supported by sous chef Grant, presented the judges with a creamy trinchado steak potjie – the secret being no potatoes and the

crucial lemon zest. Jessie dazzled the judges with her 'pap that went to private school' and home-made ginger beer. Slicing, dicing, heavy lifting and most importantly drinks pouring was done by Roger, Jacques, Morag, Ingrid, Gugu and Michèle.

Despite our valiant efforts and attempts to bribe and charm the judges we didn't place.

Get to Know Dave Elliott



If you had to eat one meal for the rest of your life what would it be?

Cereal has always been my go to meal especially if there is nothing planned for dinner. Regardless of the brand just throw any of it at me and I'll love it.

The only other favourite food I like is anything with steak in it. If I ever want to treat myself or anyone else then we're having a good steak. There is nothing I enjoy more be it in winter or in the rain than starting a fire on my little Weber braai stand and grinding down salt and pepper on a steak and cooking that medium rare with a nice side or vegetable.

If you could choose to have any superpower what would it be?

It would be to see into the future. A lot of my life and job revolves around trying to predict aspects of the future and trying to cater for it. So, if I had the ability to see into the future, I would take a lot more leave days.

If you were a wrestler what would your entrance/theme song be?

It would probably be 'Back in Black' by AC/DC. I tried to find multiple ways to get this song into my wedding and it was turned down for the first song as you can imagine. I eventually managed to get the DJ to play it for the garter toss.

What I love about the song is that it has a super amount of gees when it starts. There's a scene on Iron Man where they play Back in Black. I think Robert Downey Jr is suave so when they played the song on the movie it just stuck with me.

What is the one thing (claim to fame) no one knows about you?

I am the best FIFA player amongst my peers. I've always backed myself as an underdog in FIFA competitions. So, what I am saying is if anyone is willing to step up to the plate, I'm ready. ■

KUDOS

A massive congratulations to [Rainier Van Niekerk](#) who just passed the Azure AZ-204 exam! This was a tough one - Rainier put in a lot of time and effort - well done sir! - **JP Swart**

Kudos to [Jacques, Quintin and Mangaliso](#) who have worked on the BES NFUM system over the last year or so. NFUM is a .Net 6, Blazor Server, Azure B2C Auth, Azure app service hosted system, that exposes a subset of The BES Group's Dynamics 365 contract administration functionality to NFU Mutual, one of The BES Group's biggest clients, allowing them to directly administer policies underwritten by BES. Without our knowledge, a Pen Test was carried out on this system last week. When I received the report, I thought that they'd incorrectly sent the incomplete test report form, because I couldn't see any results. Eventually, the summary section below explained the complete lack of any other results / vulnerabilities / issues in the rest of the report. Well done team. I've never seen a pen test find absolutely nothing to note. This is what happens when things are done right, with good tech choices and...

Get to know Robin Munyoro



If you had to eat one meal for the rest of your life what would it be?

The one meal I find myself constantly ordering when eating out is fish. Fish is the one delicacy I thoroughly enjoy, be it with rice or chips.

If you could choose to have any superpower what would it be?

It would definitely be the ability to gain knowledge at lighting speed. On the series Suits, there is a character on there that is able to quickly browse a book and let you know what is written on each and every page. Being able to do that on a daily basis would really be awesome.

If you were a wrestler what would your entrance/theme song be?

I am a huge WWE fan. My favourite wrestlers are The Rock and John Cena. So, my theme song would be either one of theirs.

What is the one thing (claim to fame) no one knows about you?

I used to be very good at soccer back in Primary

School. My skills were unmatched. I remember scoring five goals in one match. Unfortunately, I stopped playing when I got to High School. ■

Get to know Ruan O'Neill



If you had to eat one meal for the rest of your life what would it be?

It would definitely be pizza. Pepperoni pizza to be specific. That's my all-time favourite.

If you could choose to have any superpower what would it be?

It would be to be super rich so I can be Batman. He is one of the most consistent superheroes in the DC universe and that's what I love about him. If you have read DC comic books, you will know that there was a whole arc where in an

20 YEARS' LONG SERVICE



Bruce Wilson
Senior Architect



Dorothy Majebela
Bookkeeper

KUDOS

...no shortcuts! Delivering systems like this give us so much credibility with the client - even they were surprised by the results. -

Mike

PROVERBS

Afrikaans

Die wat nie waag nie, wen nie.

Translation: Those who don't dare, don't win.

Meaning: Nobody can expect to win or succeed in life without pushing their own boundaries.

Zulu

Isina muva liyabukwa.

Translation: The one who dances last grabs all the attention.

Meaning: The success of a late bloomer tends to grab more attention than that of those who attain success at the very start of their journeys.

Swati

Litsemba alibulali.

Translation: Hope does not kill.

Meaning: Having hope has never killed anyone even when it is lost.

Sesotho

Nako e phalla ka noka.

Translation: Time flows like a river.

Meaning: Time is of the essence.

Xhosa

Kuyasa nangomso.

Translation: It shall dawn again tomorrow.

Meaning: Each and every new day brings with it a chance to try again.

alternate universe all the DC superheroes were evil except for Batman who remained the same person in both universes.

If you were a wrestler what would your entrance/theme song be?

It would be Bodies by Drowning Pool. I haven't watched wrestling in a while so I am not sure if someone uses the song.

What is the one thing (claim to fame) no one knows about you?

I play the electric guitar really well. I actually used to be in a band back in High School. ■

Get to know Carol Motha

If you had to eat one meal for the rest of your life what would it be?

Avocado with white bread and black tea. I'd probably lose weight and remain skinny because this combo improves my metabolism. I would also have glowing skin at 70 and that's all that matters.

If you could choose to have any superpower what would it be?

Even though I am afraid of speed and heights, I would love the ability to teleport. During the weekend I would teleport to America, stalk a few celebrities then off to Paris for a little holiday, then end it off in Mauritius and make it back on time for work on Monday morning.

If you were a wrestler what would your entrance/theme song be?

Ngud' by Kwesta and Cassper Nyovest. I don't have any moves to save my life so this song requires very minimal dance moves and will send a powerful message to my opponent. It has a hype and vibe for my supporters. The opening line to the chorus is "Yabona ngizomoshaka kakhulu" which translates to "Check it out, I am about to cause serious havoc". Hopefully that opening line makes my opponent shake

5 YEARS' LONG SERVICE



Kaashief Hartley
Senior Programme
Manager



Cleorisha Francis
Call Centre
Team Lead



before I even get to that ring. All that would be left for me to do is give them a little push, they fall and it's a win. Yay!

What is the one thing (claim to fame) no one knows about you?

My cooking skills are almost as good as Rebecca's kitchen. They can DM me for collaborations but I don't come cheap!

Social News

Cape Town Family Day

The Singular CT team had their first family day which was held at the Rondebosch Sports club. It was a day filled with fun and games for the whole family, hosted by Adventure Works. Everyone was able to enjoy leisurely activities like Giant Scrabble, Giant Jenga, Boule, Croquet, Badminton, Volleyball, Lawn Bowls, Pogo sticks and other games. We were lucky enough

to even have child minders and many games for the little ones to enjoy too. Everyone really enjoyed the day, and it was so nice to spend the day with everyone's families and to see each others' partners again.



Spring(bok) Day

We celebrated Spring day with some questionable fashion and a slushy machine. Everyone got involved in the gees and dressed to impress (or not impress). We had a

lot of laughs and some healthy competition across divisions and offices that day. Congratulations to **Pamela de Beer** and **Benjamin van Staden** on winning "best dressed".



PROVERBS

Xitsonga

Hambi wo famba enkoveni lundza ri ta vonaka.

Translation: Even if you walk in a valley your head will be visible.

Meaning: Whatever is done in secret, will eventually come to light.

Sepedi

Go swara tau ka mariri.

Translation: To grab a Lion by its mane.

Meaning: To be brave, choosing to deal with a difficult situation in a very direct way.

Setswana

Sedikwa ke ntšwa-pedi ga se thata.

Translation: That which is seized by two dogs is never too strong.

Meaning: Many hands make light work.

Ndebele

Ukubona kanye kubona kabili.

Translation: To see once, is to see twice.

Meaning: Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.

Tshivenda

Duvha ʘi farwa ʘi sa athu u bva.

Translation: The sun is caught before it rises.

Meaning: The person who takes the earliest opportunity to do something gains an advantage over others.



Singular Financial Services

Singular Financial Services hosted an exhilarating and enjoyable game night on September 1, 2023. The event brought together participants organised into five spirited teams: the A-Team, Little Ponies, Fantastic Four, Leftovers, and Simba's Pride.

The evening was filled with an assortment of engaging activities, including challenges like cup stacking, hoop tossing, daring feats, and the intriguing "guess the person" game. To keep everyone energised and fuelled, the event offered a variety of beverages, snacks, and delectable pizza options. The victorious team was the A-Team, who mopped the floor with other contestants.

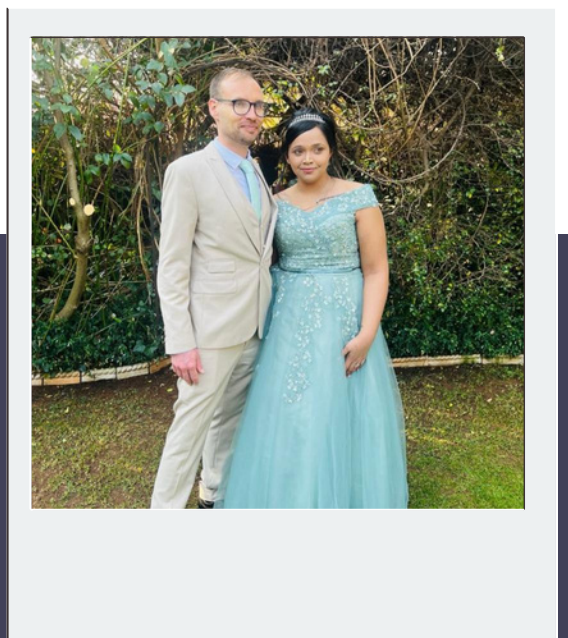
In summary, Game Night was a resounding success, leaving all attendees with lasting memories and a sense of camaraderie. It's clear that more such gatherings are not only wanted but also needed for the people of Singular. We look forward to planning many more exciting nights like these for our fantastic Team.

Heritage Day in Pictures



STAFF NEWS

Dayne Fortuin (CPT) is expecting his second baby in January | Anja Anderson (JHB) got engaged to Kobus | Rainier van Niekerk (CPT) completed his Microsoft Certified Azure Developer Associate Certification exam | Llewelyn Beaver (JHB) got married to Lucille.



WE VALUE YOUR OPINION

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

Upcoming Year-End Functions

Johannesburg

GATHER 'ROUND, CITY SLICKERS
& URBAN COWFOLK!
*We're heading out to the countryside
for some barnyard fun and laughter...*

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING
ANOTHER
successful year!

The Barn, Irene Dairy Farm
NOV 18TH, 2023
SATURDAY | AT 12 P.M.
PLEASE ONLY RSVP [HERE](#) BY FRIDAY, 3 NOV 2023

Moo-chas gracias!

singular systems
simplifying complexity

Cape Town

AMAZING RACE

NOVEMBER 24TH 2023

STARTING AT THE LAWNS (PLANETARIUM)
2PM
THEN
TIGERS MILK, KLOOF STREET
5:30PM TO 8PM

RSVP BY 24TH OCTOBER TO:
KSYRETT@SINGULAR.CO.ZA OR ACCEPT THE
INVITATION BY THIS DATE

ADVENTURE WORKS! & singular systems
simplifying complexity