

Team Member Tuesday Roger McKenzie Treasuring The Wisdom Taught By Experience

Posted **October 26, 2021**

Roger McKenzie has learned from his decades in trading and treasury that, even in the darkest of times, there is always a light at the end of the tunnel.

McKenzie, a graduate of St Catherine High School, started his work life as a counter clerk. He is now the assistant vice-president (AVP) of treasury and trading at Sagicor Investments Jamaica Limited. He shared that the years have taught him to maintain good temperament and be patient, even when things don't seem to be going well.

"It's about keeping your head above water at all times," McKenzie told Career & Education. "As a treasurer, you must always maintain some amount of calm, and understand that volatility in the market will come and there are different cycles to everything, and it is in these volatile periods that you have to be most strategic in how you execute."

Finding opportunities in times of difficulty is a constant challenge, he said, but one that he finds immense joy and purpose in.

"It takes a lot of patience to understand that the market has cycles, and you have to manoeuvre those cycles successfully, because at the end of the storm there is always a silver lining," he added.

McKenzie proved this notion to be true in 2020 when the novel coronavirus pandemic caused the economy to become turbulent, yet he managed to not only steer his team back to calmer waters, but to also put them on a path to recovery.

"Even in the worst pandemic that the world has seen since early 1900s, I tried my best to see the silver lining," he said reflectively. "There was so much downward pressure on the market, but we positioned ourselves so strategically that by September we were almost meeting our department's budget again. Crises normally present opportunities if you look closely, so we must always enact good principles during turbulent times."

Getting to this career pinnacle did not happen overnight. After working in retail banking as a counter clerk, and then a teller for the first few years of his work life, McKenzie joined what is now the Sagicor Group in 1999.

"At the time I was working in client services, but the then treasurer liked how confident I was when I interacted with the clients, and he said that I should come and trade because the clients are always drawn to me."

McKenzie decided to take the treasurer up on the offer, and in 2002 he started climbing the rungs of Sagicor's trading

and treasury unit.

"I've been through a lot of mergers," he remarked. "I've seen a lot of cultures coming together, and it takes a lot of discipline to integrate successfully and maintain your role and your dominance, while being proficient in your performance during those periods."

His passion for self-development led him to further his education while working full-time. After obtaining his first degree in management studies from the University of Technology, Jamaica, he read for a master's in banking and finance at the Mona School of Business Management at The University of the West Indies (UWI).

McKenzie was appointed AVP of treasury and trading in 2018 and, in this capacity, he effectively leads in the management of the balance sheets for Sagicor Investments Jamaica Limited (SIJL).

"My team and I essentially manage the whole aspect of the Treasury and Trading Unit — stocks, bonds, and repurchasing agreements, which is a deposit-based product," he explained. "I supervise the stock brokerage unit, the fixed income traders, and see to it that funds are deployed as effectively as possible. We're a part of a new unit at Sagicor called Group Treasury and Asset Management."

McKenzie also applies his philosophy of seeing opportunities during challenges outside of his corporate life, where he is very passionate about philanthropy on a personal level. As an avid sports fan, the Arsenal supporter is a part of a Christian group that uses sports to minister to youth in underserved communities.

"We found that sports can be used as a very strong tool to get men together, and we used it as a precursor to get young men in those communities to access resources and have closer relationships with God," he shared. "I'm not a Bill Gates, but I try to do my part. Before I got into those communities I think I was a bit out of touch with what was really happening in parts of our society. But when I saw first-hand what was happening, I found an innate zeal to help to make a difference."

When he's not working, engaging in inner-city community development, or spending time in quiet reflection with God, McKenzie enjoys all things sports, especially track and field, football, basketball, cricket, and since recently the American National Football League (NFL).

"I love to learn, and I enjoy laughing," he shared light-heartedly. "I believe that life is short, and we must enjoy it as much as we can, while living in a way that is pleasing to God. I also enjoy spending time and talking with my siblings and extended family, as we are a very close-knit bunch."

McKenzie continues to grow wiser through experience, and treasuring the lessons learned along the way.

"I am looking forward to continuing to elevate from a career perspective and continuing to make a difference in Jamaica and in people's lives," McKenzie said. "The sky is the limit. I believe education is the foundation of success, and I believe in humility. I also believe that we must help each other along the way; it makes for us a better country."

For more on Sagicor culture, work life and inspiring team member stories, follow us on our