

*“Women must surround themselves with positive friends and colleagues. Those that will add value to their lives, give positive feedback and help shape their lives professionally and morally”*



#### Who are your major clients?

Our major clients are Malawi Posts Office, Telekom, John Hopkins and BP Filling Stations, just to mention a few. We have a very good relationship with them especially because they trust us with our services.

#### How do you ensure your survival in the market considering the competitive environment?

We work on having adequate resources at all times. We've got enough vehicles, to rush to a scene at any needed time. Our services are quick, we replace guards as soon as possible and we have got radio communication to speed up operations and facilitate effectiveness. At Chilon, we also have a flat structure to ease communication and improve operational efficiency. Our charges are very competitive but the services are of the highest quality. Our staff are motivated and well disciplined in the industry. We also have various incentive schemes.

#### What are the qualities a leader must have, to make the company grow?

I think patience and being a good listener. Do not talk alot but understand what your subordinates are presenting to you. However, in our field, you have to be firm (not harsh of course) because this is like a military field and you cannot just be soft minded, you need to show that you can lead and can decide on issues. Also as a leader, you do not have to be extravagant. Prudent financial management and investment are very crucial for growth and to sustain the growth.

#### Your analysis of women empowerment in Malawi?

A lot has to be done despite the birth of many NGO's focusing on women issues. Malawi still has so many poor people and women unfortunately, happen to be a large share of the poor (according to statistics). Strategies have to be placed to empower Malawian women with education. We give women loans but the question is "do they know how to handle them? The challenge with such initiatives is that a lot of our women are illiterate. Empowering women should aim at moving and sustaining them from one level to another, and that should be evident and visible. A time should come when, talking about a Malawian woman, we should think of independence. Men who try to interfere also affect empowerment initiatives and in the process women get confused. You find, for example, men who also get the same borrowed money from their wives and never return it and that means the woman is back to step one.

#### Do you think there is enough support from men?

I think as women, we also need more support from men just as they do from us. I am blessed to be one of the women with full support from my husband financially and emotionally. It is unfortunate that men sometimes build a wall for women and it is usually difficult to break it.

They do it because of inferiority complex; they think you want to overpower them. But I think the bottom line is for women to communicate well with their husbands. Do not surprise him with anything, when you want to achieve something, build a communication foundation with him then he will support you. But as I said, support could be there but without education and

awareness, it does not yield much. Where there is no support at all, then the challenges become unbearable. On a positive note, Malawian women are strong and put their heart in what they want to achieve. They do not think about what others will say, Malawian women just look ahead until their goal is accomplished. Women must also surround themselves with positive friends and colleagues. Those that will add value to their lives, give positive feedback and help shape their lives professionally and morally.

#### Who inspires you and Why?

Oprah Winfrey inspires me a great deal. She is an achiever and a giver. She is very rich but humble. She is a symbol to anybody regardless of colour or age. If I had the skill and talent in talk show, I would have started my own TV Show, doing things my way but I would support anyone who would want to start one. Joyce Meyer, a dynamic preacher and motivator, also inspires me. As women we go through a lot and she really guides a way and creates solutions. She touches genuine issues that affect our daily lives. I admire her greatly.

Back home, I admire Mary Kaphwereza Banda and Joyce Banda because of their respective contribution to the education sector in Malawi and of course their contribution to the communities through their respective political and ministerial roles. They are both hard-working. Apart from these we have a lot of Malawian women who are models and have achieved a lot and are role models to all aspiring women and girls, too numerous to mention one by one.

#### What are your plans for the next couple of years?

As a director, I want Chilon to be a group of companies venturing into many different areas of business. I would also want to open my own printing company.

#### Free time?

I like watching TV a lot and as a Malawian woman I also enjoy attending functions that allow me to mix with fellow ladies.