



## Meet: **Philandes McNair**

Quality Lead, Hattiesburg, MS

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Each morning as Philandes McNair ties his tie around the collar of his freshly starched shirt, there is a little voice inside that tells him it is not necessary. After all, Maximus does not have a dress code that requires him to wear a shirt and tie. And yet, each day before going to work, Philandes (his friends call him Phil) proudly tightens his tie, grabs his suit jacket, and heads to work. He does it because he is preparing.

One of the philosophies that Phil lives by is that you can be anything you are *prepared* to be. Starting out at Maximus as a Customer Service Rep, Phil realized there

were things he needed to learn. Skills he needed to develop.

Phil recalls, “In the beginning, I was not as good with people. I had to evaluate myself. I wasn't mean or anything but I am naturally quiet. So I really had to pay attention and make sure that the person I was dealing with on the other end of the phone felt like I was trying to do my best to help them.”

And so Phil went to work improving his listening and communication skills. That in turn prepared him to be in a position to

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reach out for opportunities when they came.

“As I applied myself, there were so many different opportunities. I started out as a Tier-One Marketplace Representative. Along the way, so many opportunities opened up: supervisor, trainer, management positions. There were so many different opportunities that I had to really gather myself, and see which direction I wanted to move in.”

As Phil advanced, he also developed leadership skills that enabled him, not only to advance his own career at Maximus but to help others advance theirs.

Hermes Boekbinder, a CSR that had worked in Phil’s group, eventually was able to take advantage of the opportunities at Maximus and advance. She fondly remembers Phil’s encouragement to be prepared.

She remembered, “When he told me you can be anything that you’re prepared to be, it made me think and it became my approach also. It really made a difference.”

However, as much as Phil is proud to help others, he is thankful that others have been there to help him.

“We have a great support system here— Our supervisors, managers, even all the way up to dealing with our site manager. We can come in and talk to each individual. They give us feedback, try to help us

along the way. There are so many different training opportunities that are available. A lot of companies talk about providing opportunities but Maximus is truly a company that stands behind their brand.”

Phil continues to wear the suit and tie because he knows he is still preparing, still learning. In the end, it’s not just the advancement he has made, it’s the people he has been able to help.

“My favorite part of working here is the interaction with the people. I like that I can impact someone’s life in a positive way, whether it’s on the phone or in person. I’m really proud of that.”