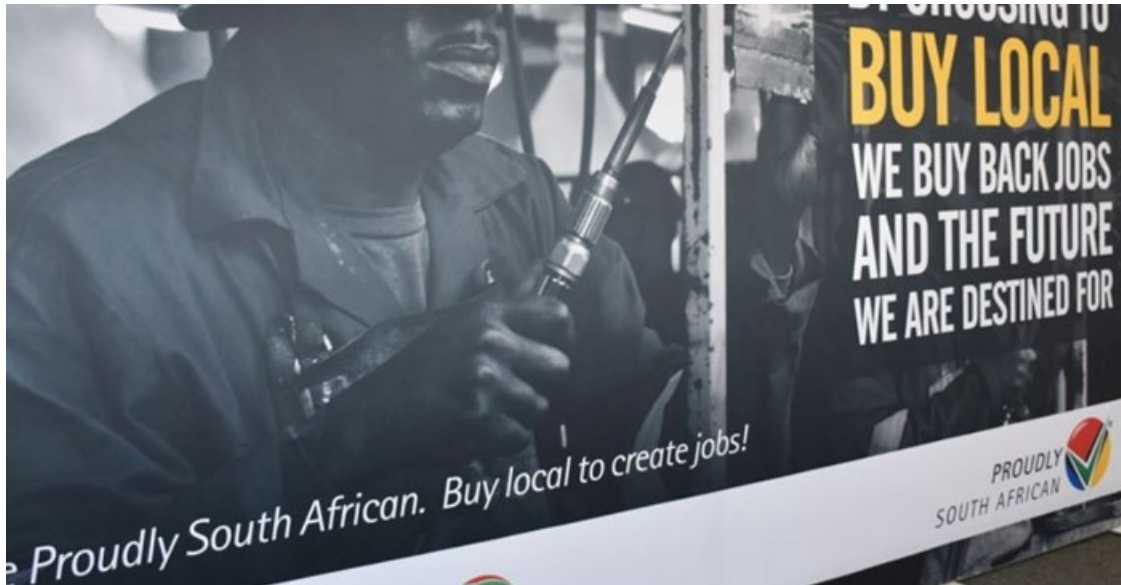


# Buy local to create jobs

By  Danette Breitenbach

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Unemployment in South Africa is at nearly 28%. Even more frightening is that of this percentage, half have never ever worked. Research shows that, if you have never had a job before, your chances of finding employment decreases with each year.



Concerns about unemployment in the country started in 1998. While the country was experiencing growth, the jobs were not forthcoming out of this growth, explains Howard Gabriels, chairperson Proudly South Africa.

He was addressing the [Buy Local Summit and Expo](#) launch that took place recently in Johannesburg. This will be the seventh Buy Local Summit and Expo. It takes place on the 14 and 15 March at the Sandton Convention Centre.

He says the 1998 jobs summit led to the creation of Proudly South Africa. "Today our mandate is the same as back then: to create jobs."

As such the biggest campaign the organisation has undertaken is to help all its stakeholders to understand how procuring or buying local can create jobs.

"This focus is to all our stakeholders, starting with all levels of government – nation, provincial and local as well as State Owned Enterprises (SOE). We are also focusing on the private sector and their supply chain managers."

The campaign extends to the community and labour movement. "The process in the communities is to educate community-based organisations to make them aware of local products and to ask for them when they shop."

When it comes to the labour movement, the organisation invites the unions to a shop steward council. "They are influential in their factories and in communicating to their members to buy local and are key stakeholders in ensuring their plant procures locally."

The last stakeholder is the retail sector. "The goal is to secure a strong commitment to increase the percentage of locally procured goods. We are positive about the work that we have been doing in this sector. For example, we have made huge progress with Edcon," he says.

## SMME focus

Edcon is also a sponsor of the event. Standard Bank is the headline sponsor. Other sponsors include Tsogo Sun, Sasol, Mango, the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller, the Department of Trade and Industry (dti), and Nestlé, with CliffCentral.com as media partner.



Proudly South Africa CEO, Eustace Mashimbye

Proudly South Africa CEO, Eustace Mashimbye, says 'local procurement: is it policy or preferences?' is the theme of the conference on Day 2, while Day 1 will focus on SMMEs.

“It is proven the world over that thriving economies are built on the back of SMMEs. These businesses are crucial in creating jobs.”

Standard Bank, head of business, Gauteng province, Willie Chavalala says if we are to reduce the unemployment rate we need to support SMMEs. “Too many SMMEs end up closing their doors because they do not have access to funding, a key component to running a business, and to markets. It is the role of the bank to engage with entrepreneurs and partner with them.”

Last year's event was attended by 700 people. The event is free to attend.

## ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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