

The role of TES in creating youth employment opportunities

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Despite the increasing rate of unemployment in South Africa, businesses can play a meaningful role in creating sustainable job opportunities for the youth, those that are most affected. The opportunity lies where Temporary Employment Services (TES) can facilitate the sharing of skills of tech-savvy youth and older generation professionals that struggle to adapt to digital transformation in their industries. This eases the transition for resources in digitally driven work environments and provides work experience for our youth that are desperate to secure employment.



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South Africa's alarmingly high unemployment rate remains a blight on the economy and adversely impacts communities, keeping many in a perpetual state of poverty and inequality.

According to figures released by StatSA, the country's official unemployment rate stands at 29%, which translates to 6.7 million people of the country's entire labour force not working. Under the expanded definition of unemployment, this figure is closer to 10 million, and the crisis is expected to deepen further.

The youth (aged 18–24 years) are the most vulnerable segment in our labour market as the unemployment rate among this group is 55.2%. This is also the demographic that is hardest hit, accounting for 63.4% of the total number of unemployed.

But efforts by the South African business sector to support the Youth Employment Service (YES) initiative are bearing fruit, with President Cyril Ramaphosa noting in his 2020 State of the Nation Address that more than 550 companies have partnered with YES to create over 32,000 quality work experiences.

Work experience

Temporary Employment Services (TES) are key to supporting government's commitment to assist the youth to secure jobs and develop sustainable careers. One of the biggest hurdles faced by the youth, even by those who have relevant qualifications, is the struggle to find employment, as they lack work experience.

To overcome this, TES can leverage the gap between tech-savvy youth and older professionals, who struggle to adapt to the technological era.

This approach was recently adopted by a technology company that identified the need for graduates, who completed its internship programme, to obtain employment in order to gain work experience.

Using its internal TES, the organisation matched the graduates with a hospital that was implementing a major digital transformation initiative. The hospital's main challenge was that its older generation healthcare professionals struggled to transition from a paper-based environment to a digital one.

The solution was to deploy a group of 10 graduates – dubbed “knowledge consultants” – to the hospital and pair them with doctors and nurses who needed guidance and assistance to understand the technology.

The knowledge transfer helped the medical professionals become comfortable with the digitisation, and enabled them to see the benefits of using devices such as iPads that integrate with core medical systems and departments, such as radiology and pathology. Furthermore, it enabled them to electronically order medicine, upload diagnoses and capture patient information.

Adding value

Change management in the healthcare sector is typically a challenge, so the graduates made a significant impact by helping the healthcare professionals see the value technology brings to their positions.

The hospital also saw notable benefits, as the new systems allowed doctors to make quicker and better decisions based on real-time information, resulting in more accurate diagnoses. In turn, this improved patient care and management, increasing the value proposition of the healthcare facility's service offering.

For their part, the graduates gained valuable work experience and exposure to the corporate environment, as well as opportunities to learn and grow. Additionally, there is potential for them to continue working with healthcare professionals and develop careers in the healthcare sector.

The success achieved by these knowledge consultants will now see another 13 graduates deployed across various hospitals, and be placed under the management of the first group, who will be promoted to team leaders.

While South Africa's job market remains challenging, T-Systems is responding to the President's call to focus on securing opportunities for the youth, and help them become entrepreneurial. We are 100% aligned to that and we will do all we can to support our country.

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