



# 7 tips to opening doors to youth employment opportunities

As we face a fragile economy and constant state of anxiety compounded by a dire unemployment rate, Daniel Gibhard, CEO at SDC (Skills Development Corporation), believes we must look forward to what good can come from all this. "From a skills development perspective, government's much needed intervention could be the catalyst to a shift in the current state of youth unemployment in our country."



Daniel Gibhard

President Ramaphosa announced in November last year that he plans to roll out a mass recruitment initiative across various sectors including education, municipal infrastructure, and the national health department that aims to employ around 800,000 people.

"Despite these optimistic plans, this is not the only option for potential employment," says Gibhard. "Learners need to prepare themselves for the workplace regardless of whether this be through government-funded initiatives, or through dedicated skills development programmes."

Gibhard encourages individuals who are looking for an appropriate skills development placement, internship, learnership or work placement to consider the following amidst the current unemployment crisis:

- **Curriculum Vitae** – these are important for potential employers or programme facilitators to gain insight into who the individuals are and where their strengths and weaknesses lie. This would be important from a training, placement and team or department perspective.
- **Cover letter** – too often the ease of chatbots built into company websites has incited an approach that may not necessarily be the best first impression when sending a message that simply says 'hi'. "Make a good first impression – address your communication clearly and tell the reader why you're getting in touch," says Gibhard.
- **Focus on the opportunity, not the paycheck** – the current economic state has devastated families all over the world. Now is the time to embrace any opportunity that may present itself. "Any opportunity is an opportunity to learn," says Gibhard.
- **Educate yourself** – aside from the skills development companies that are offering work readiness learnerships and various other programmes, try and upskill yourself by exploring the various Microsoft, email or other specific programs that you may need to use in the environment you're hoping to grow a career in.
- **Meeting the requirements** – often when there is a job spec or skills development programme being advertised or promoted, the company will include details on the minimum admission requirements. Read these carefully and ensure you have all the paperwork and copies of the necessary documents as chances are if one company is requesting this information, others will too.
- **Dress for success** – first impressions last. Ensure that when you meet your prospective employer, internship or skills development facilitator, your clothes and hair are neat and clean. More recently, masks are also necessary so make sure they're clean and sanitised.
- **Once online, always online** – today it has become MUCH easier to do a brief background check on an applicant by simply typing their names into Google or Facebook. Make sure the content these people are presented with in the search results is in good taste and offers a brief peek into the type of person you would want them to meet.

"I chose to live my life by the motto that behind every dark cloud is a silver lining. South Africa needs its youth to stimulate a recovering economy but the opportunities may not necessarily come knocking, so do a bit of your own research and investigation and you'll soon discover a closed door that may need opening," concludes Gibhard.

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