

Why you should be employing younger staff

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The workforce is changing. The average age of workers is rising, and the number of young people entering the workforce is declining. This is a concern in a country where youth unemployment is so high. Young people in South Africa are underemployed at higher rates than older people on the job market. According to Stats SA, by the end of the first quarter of 2023, the underemployment rate was 6.3% for 15 - 24 years of age, and 5.2% for those aged 24 - 34. This is significantly higher than the national rate (4.9%).



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Here is why it is important to hire younger staff, how they can benefit your business, and how to go about hiring younger staff.

The importance of hiring younger staff

Young people bring new ideas and perspectives to the workplace. They are more likely to be familiar with new technologies and trends, and they can help businesses to stay ahead of the curve. Younger staff are often more adaptable and willing to learn new things. They are not afraid of change, and they are eager to take on new challenges. This can be an asset for businesses that are constantly evolving.

Young people can also bring with them energy and enthusiasm that older staff sometimes cannot. They can bring a fresh new spirit to the workplace, and they can help to create a more positive and productive environment. By hiring young people, businesses can gain access to new ideas, energy, and enthusiasm. They can also save money on salaries and benefit costs, and they can build a more long-term workforce.

Marc Benoiff, CEO of Salesforce had this to say about hiring young people:

“ We need to stop thinking of young people as a liability and start thinking of them as an asset. They are the ones who are going to be driving innovation in the future, and we need to harness their energy and creativity. ”

The benefits of hiring younger staff

Hiring younger staff could be just what you need to take your business to the next level. They bring with them a different worldview, fresh outlook, and a willingness to learn. Here are some of the key benefits:

- **New ideas and perspectives:** Young people bring new ideas and perspectives to the workplace. They are more likely to be familiar with new technologies and trends, and they can help businesses to stay ahead of the curve.
- **Adaptability and willingness to learn:** Young people are often more adaptable and willing to learn new things. They are not afraid of change, and they are eager to take on new challenges. This can be an asset for businesses that are constantly evolving.
- **Energy and enthusiasm:** Young people are often more energetic and enthusiastic than their older counterparts. They can bring a fresh new spirit to the workplace, and they can help to create a more positive and productive environment.
- **Lower salary expectations:** Younger employees may have lower salary expectations than older employees, which can save businesses money.
- **Longer-term commitment:** Younger employees are more likely to stay with a company for the long term, which can help to reduce turnover costs.



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10 Feb 2023



Debunking common concerns

Of course, there are common concerns about hiring younger staff. Some employers worry that young people are not as experienced or reliable as older workers. Others worry that they will be too demanding or that they will not fit in with the existing culture.

Here are some concerns and why they are largely overstated:

- **Lack of experience:** Young people may not have as much experience as older employees, which can be a concern for some businesses. However, with the right training and support, young people can quickly learn the ropes and become valuable members of the team.

- **Unreliability:** Some employers worry that young people are not as reliable as older workers. However, this is often not the case. Young people are just as capable of being reliable as anyone else, and they are often more eager to please.
- **Demanding:** Some employers worry that young people will be too demanding. However, this is also often not the case. Young people are just as willing to work hard as anyone else, and they are often grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow.
- **Not fitting in:** Some employers worry that young people will not fit in with the existing culture. However, this is a concern that can be easily addressed by creating a welcoming and supportive workplace environment.

We find that often the things that are seen as weaknesses in the workplace are the result of young people not being given enough time to develop the necessary skills and experience to navigate the working world. By taking these young people on, giving them the opportunities, and mentoring them into their roles, you create team members who are passionate, enthusiastic, and full of fresh ideas.



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Some top tips for hiring younger staff

If you are looking for ways to attract and retain younger employees, there are a number of things you can do. By following these tips, you can attract more young people to your company and build a more diverse and dynamic workforce:

- **Brand yourself as an employer of choice for young people.** This means highlighting your company's culture, values, and benefits in a way that appeals to young people. For example, you could emphasise your company's commitment to diversity and inclusion, its flexible work policies, or its opportunities for professional development.
- **Be present where young people are.** This means using social media, attending job fairs at colleges and universities, and networking with young professionals. You can also partner with organisations that are popular with young people, such as charities or sports teams.
- **Tailor your job postings to appeal to young people.** Use language that is clear and concise and highlight the benefits that are most important to young people, such as opportunities for travel, learning, and advancement.
- **Make the application process easy and streamlined.** Young people are often eager to start their careers, so they don't want to spend a lot of time filling out lengthy applications. Make sure your application process is easy to follow and that you respond to applications promptly.
- **Offer competitive salaries and benefits.** Young people are often more cost-conscious than older workers, so they want to make sure they are being paid fairly. Make sure your salaries and benefits are competitive with other companies in your industry.
- **Provide opportunities for professional development and growth.** Young people are eager to learn and grow, so they want to work for a company that offers opportunities for professional development. Make sure your company has a clear career path and that you provide opportunities for training and development.
- **Create a positive and inclusive workplace culture.** Young people want to work for a company that they feel comfortable in and that shares their values. Make sure your workplace culture is welcoming and inclusive, and that

you celebrate diversity.

By taking these steps, you can create a workplace where young people can thrive. And in doing so, you can benefit from their fresh ideas, energy, and enthusiasm.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sasha Knott is the CEO and Kelly Louw, the COO, of Job Crystal. Job Crystal™ is a leading innovator in the field of recruitment AI, dedicated to creating cutting-edge technologies that help make a dent in unemployment. With a strong focus on ethics, transparency, and human collaboration, we strive to develop AI systems that empower individuals and organisations while upholding the highest standards of responsibility.

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