

## **Job seekers have the opportunity for employment flexibility and security**



South Africa has one of the highest unemployment rates globally, which results in significant economic challenges. It has also created a growing contingent of discouraged job seekers, who have effectively given up on trying to secure employment, which exacerbates the issue. However, in a turbulent market, employers are also struggling, creating a problem from both sides. Temporary Employment Service (TES) providers offer an ideal solution on both fronts, giving job seekers the opportunity for employment while enabling employers greater flexibility regarding the uncertainty of the future market.

### **The unemployment problem**

The Statistics South Africa Quarterly Labour Force Survey for Q1 2021 paints a grim picture for South Africa. Unemployment is at its highest level since the report began in 2008, sitting at 32.6%. In addition to this, the number of discouraged job seekers increased by 6.9%, bringing the total population that is not economically active to a staggering 43.2%. Furthermore, the official unemployment rate among the youth is now 46.3%.

This situation is not sustainable for South Africa - the economy cannot grow when nearly half of the population does not, or is unable to, participate due to lack of resources and accessibility. TES providers not only offer a short-term solution to providing employment, but they can also actively contribute to economic growth, as the model supports greater flexibility which is essential in our current uncertain times. In addition, it contributes to skills development allowing individuals to upskill and cross skill, providing them with even more employment opportunities.

### **A mutually beneficial arrangement**

While some parties may regard TES providers in a negative light, given that they offer employment in the short term, it has become a far more standard model globally (also known as the gig economy) and benefits both employers and employees. In these ever-changing times, employers find the flexible staffing

model to be more relevant than ever. They are able to secure skilled employment for a fixed period, linked to their current projects, and can scale up and down as and when requirements change (i.e. according to seasonal work, volumes increasing or decreasing, etc.). In addition, using a TES provider allows employers to focus on their core business again. Rather than undertaking the arduous task of staffing, including the various elements related to staffing such as payroll, Human Resources (HR), industrial relations and so forth, this will be taken care of by the TES provider.

For employees, TES providers offer access to a broad network of potential job opportunities at various employers across different sectors and industries. Gaining access to multiple employers means job seekers can find employment close to their residence, in industries they are skilled in, or interested in learning more about, which is almost impossible to achieve with permanent employment.

In addition, temporary positions offer more flexible working hours. They are typically shift-based, so employees can take on shifts that best meet their schedule and commitments, if these are available.

### **A spark of hope**

TES providers assist job seekers in finding temporary employment to generate an income and support their families during these unprecedented times, rather than receiving no income at all. In addition, the right TES provider can offer temporary employees benefits, including medical health plans, employee assistance programs, funeral cover, short-term personal loans, learnerships, internships and training.

A reputable TES provider has skilled sales, Human Resources (HR), legal and Industrial Relations (IR) teams to negotiate better terms and conditions (Ts & Cs) in an employment contract as well as other benefits that will be in their favour. This ensures that employees receive the best contract possible.

Temporary employment is more flexible than a permanent role, which means that it is possible in some instances to have more than one role or contract to increase earning potential. It offers opportunities to obtain specialised skills or become multi-skilled, and in some cases, to choose where and when to work. As a temporary employee, it is also possible to change career paths and gain skills in new areas or be offered permanent employment after gaining experience in a role.

### **Turn to TES**

TES providers are an excellent place for job seekers to start, as they will assist with finding suitable roles, securing interviews and arranging the necessary inductions and training. TES providers offer protection for employees to ensure that they are being paid a fair wage (as per the National Minimum Wage Act) and that their working conditions are safe (as per the Occupational Health and Safety Act). They also ensure that all regulatory requirements are met, as per the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Labour Relations Act and Employment Equity Act, to name a few. Temporary employment has a vital role in revitalising South Africa's economy and ensuring that more people can share in economic participation.