

Temporary employment services help address growing unemployment through placements in manufacturing



The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown had a devastating effect on the South African labour force. However, the recovery of South Africa's manufacturing sector might offer some slight relief. The lack of mechanisation in the industry means it is more labour intensive in South Africa than in more developed nations. As such, there are many opportunities for contract and shift workers to start at the bottom and work their way up in this sector, and Temporary Employment Services (TES) providers are well positioned to assist.

A massive unemployment problem

The latest Stats SA statistics show that unemployment increased by 2.2 million people to a total of 6.5 million, compared to the second quarter of 2020. This is a 52.1% increase in the number of unemployed people in the country. Of the 2.85 million people who lost their jobs or were placed on temporary leave during lockdown, only 543,000 managed to get their jobs back.

However, the food manufacturing space offers numerous opportunities for employment. This industry remains economically active, and by its nature supports contract and shift work, offering more people the chance of employment.

Opportunities for employment and growth

One of the benefits of the manufacturing sector is that much of the training is provided on the job, which means the entry criteria is lowered. There are also numerous learnerships, skills development levies and opportunities for upskilling, giving motivated employees the opportunity to work their way up.

For example, in food manufacturing, all staff are brought on board as trainees and provided with the training to grow on the job and move up the ranks as they learn. An individual who starts out as a picker-packer and shows initiative may be upskilled by their employer and can then move on to other roles that provide a higher income.

Connecting businesses with the skills they need

Manufacturing is an incredibly diverse industry, which means that there are many opportunities to be found. However, the skills required vastly differ, which can make finding the right staff a challenge. TES providers are an invaluable resource in this sector, as they have a large pool of job seekers and can easily match people to placements. They are also in an excellent position to run and manage learnerships to provide the necessary skills.

For employees, TES providers present the opportunity of exposure to jobs across many different areas of manufacturing – a factor that is critical in current times where there is a lack of stability around employment prospects. They can also provide a broader base for upskilling and create a ‘foot in the door’ for job seekers in order to secure gainful employment.

TES providers help to connect businesses, particularly in the manufacturing sector, with the skills they need, and job seekers with employment opportunities. This win-win situation can also help to stabilise the local economy and assist with its recovery following the pandemic.

By Donn  Nieman, Sales Director (Western Cape) at Workforce Staffing