

New app set to change unemployment, poverty in SA



By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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South Africa's unemployment rate is at its highest in over a decade, with more than 6 million people now being unemployed. Jobbie is a mobile app-driven job market that aims to reduce unemployment and poverty.



Eugene Coetzee, co-founder of Jobbie

We chat to Eugene Coetzee, co-founder of Jobbie, to find out more about the app that helps connect trusted workers with potential employment...

■ **Can you tell us a bit about Jobbie?** Jobbie is a free mobile app that can help you get any odd job done by connecting you to trusted workers, such as handymen, plumbers, electricians, builders, etc. Jobbie's mission is to revolutionise the South African job market by creating a new, mobile-app driven job market that will reduce unemployment and poverty.

■ **When, how and why did you get started?**

Jobbie co-founder, Jan Vosloo and I, met on a very regular basis to discuss how innovative tech solutions could solve everyday problems. We really wanted to find the right problem to solve and build a company around the solution to that problem. During one of our meetings in mid-2017, we were both frustrated with how difficult it was to get the right workers to do maintenance tasks at our homes - and so, Jobbie was born. We officially launched in Cape Town in January 2018.

■ ***What is the core function of Jobbie?***

Jobbie is a platform that connects customers and workers. We give customers the ability to post jobs, to get quotes from workers, to review the ratings that workers received for other jobs, and to eventually appoint and pay a worker through the app once the job is completed. We give workers access to thousands of new customers and provide them with marketing support. Workers who do excellent work and get excellent ratings are rewarded with more jobs. Jobbie enables workers to accept card payments - all of this from the convenience of a mobile device - anytime, anywhere.

■ ***What are some of the obstacles you've had to overcome since starting out?***

In a startup, you need to play all of the different roles. Jan and I both have technical backgrounds which meant that we had to learn new skills that are outside of our comfort zones (e.g. market and competitive analysis, financial projections, marketing, pitch decks, etc.). A lot of this was done through trial and error.

■ ***What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs?***

An idea is nothing without execution. There is no replacement for hard work.

■ ***What has been your proudest achievement thus far?***

Every job that is completed through our platform is an achievement for us. Most recently, we have passed the 3,000 mark for jobs posted and the 500 mark for jobs that were completed by Jobbie workers.

■ ***What does the future of entrepreneurship look like to you?***

The future looks very promising for us. There are still so many aspects of people's lives that can be improved by innovative tech solutions, and so many new things/experiences that we can't even think of now that innovative tech solutions will bring. Innovative tech solutions are playing a large role in disrupting archaic/slow/bureaucratic industries which we all benefit from.

■ ***What do you think is the importance of startup accelerator/incubator programmes?***

An accelerator/incubation programme gives structure to what can be a very chaotic experience when starting a new company. It helps you to focus and provides support on the important aspects of creating a business that you might not have much/any experience with.

■ ***What would you like to see changed in the South African startup landscape?***

Compared to other parts of the world, there is a relatively low amount of risk capital available to startups in South Africa (and really all of Africa). We need more people to take a chance on a country and continent that has so much to give.

■ ***What do you believe are the traits an entrepreneur needs in order to succeed?***

There are many, but I will list my top 5: Hard work, "never say die" attitude, versatility (i.e. playing multiple roles), a learning/growth mindset (you will never know everything), and optimistic realism.

■ ***Tell us about your biggest struggles as an entrepreneur, as well as some major highlights.***

Especially in the business-to-consumer space, reaching your customer base and making sure they hear you can be very

hard. You need the expertise, experience and the funds to achieve this which is not always readily available. Highlights for us come in everyday small forms: hearing your ad on the radio, seeing positive feedback from customers and workers, seeing an article about your company on a national website and talking to workers that really have seen an increase in their income due to your business.

▣ ***Why would you encourage someone to become an entrepreneur?***

Entrepreneurship allows you to create something brand new (your own "baby") that can positively impact a large group of people and the economy of South Africa (and hopefully beyond). If that does not excite you, I don't know what will.

▣ ***Where would you like to see Jobbie in the next five years?***

In the next three years, we want to see Jobbie available in all major South African cities and towns. After that, we want to conquer the rest of Africa.

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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