

How SMEs can attract the best of SA's youth using online recruitment platforms

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Owners of small to medium sized businesses must wear many hats... one of them being the ability to attract and retain quality talent. According to Stats SA, approximately 68% of South Africa's labour force falls within the Gen Y (millennials) and Gen Z age brackets. So how do SMEs find the best that our youth has to offer?



The informal and SME sectors are driving many of the employment opportunities in our local labour market. However, SMEs don't seem to be taking advantage of specialist online recruitment platforms when it comes to promoting these opportunities far and wide, which limits their chances of finding the right talent and making the unseen potential visible. Currently only 6% of advertised jobs on Pnet's platform belong to SMEs, compared to 94% job adverts posted by corporates and recruitment agencies.

Unsurprisingly, the youth are using online channels more than any other jobseeker segment. They are online-savvy, and mobile/apps are often their first port of call. According to a study from customer management firm Epsilon, Gen Zers are two times more likely to use online-only stores than any other generation. They thrive on self-serve options where they retain control. As such, SMEs are missing out when they don't advertise their job vacancies on specialist recruitment platforms to access this market.

Both Gen Z and millennials are 'immediate' consumers, in that they expect to access things quickly and easily – whether it's access to transport through Uber, satiating food cravings through online food orders, or finding their next career opportunity using an online recruitment platform.

If you're looking for young and talented individuals to join your business, you need to be aware that UX and CX are important to them. As such, using 'offline' channels to try and reach them with job vacancies could result in you losing out to other brands who are leveraging the power of online recruitment platforms like that of Pnet.

Leave recruitment to the experts and focus on your core business

That said, posting your job ads on an online platform is only the first step in attracting quality candidates. Hiring the wrong employee can severely impact your business. The good news is that, with the right recruitment partner in place, you can

save both time and money.

1. Start with an engaging job advert

To attract the best Gen Y and Gen Z candidates, your job ads need to reflect more than a 'laundry list' of requirements. 'Purpose' is a powerful decider for South Africa's youth. Their focus is on building careers and making money, but their careers and hobbies feed strongly into their sense of self. This leads them to be both discerning and highly critical. Your job adverts must be factual, succinct and inspirational. When it comes to creating an ideal online job advert, there are some important dos and don'ts to keep in mind, however your listing's success will ultimately depend on the quality of a recruitment portal's technology combined with its jobseeker database.

"At the end of the day, posting a job advert is not just about making a job sound attractive to the candidate," says Leigh-Anne Cullen, Pnet's product manager. "The way the information is integrated into our platform is enabled by our smart matching technology, which focuses on automating screening, optimising selection and eliminating bias from the recruitment process. This is critical when it comes to matching the right candidates to the right roles and significantly affects how job adverts perform."

The sophistication of specialist online recruitment platforms ensures that the right candidates see your job adverts – not only allowing you to attract fresh talent, but also to find quality candidates who are actively looking to move. And, if you only require a once-off listing, there are e-commerce products that can be purchased online without a subscription.

2. Take the legwork out of discovering talent

In the words of Richard Branson: "If you really want to grow as an entrepreneur, you've got to learn to delegate." In a small-to-medium enterprise, it's even more critical than in larger organisations to outsource functions to experts so that you can get on with your core business. Making use of recruitment services like Pnet's Response Handling solution can help to make the matching process a seamless one for you. As experts on the Pnet system, they know how to input your job description to get the best performance out of your job ad.

The creation of suitable shortlists and management of the entire process will be done on your behalf, so that you can get on with your core business activities until you're ready to review the shortlisted candidates and set up time to interview them. The process is simple. All you'll need to do is provide a detailed job description, your shortlist criteria and a closing date. We will manage the rest. First, we'll generate an advert with a link to a uniquely designed questionnaire, structured to your criteria, to rate and score applicants. Gen Y and Gen Z individuals tend to be 'job hoppers', so we streamline your background check strategy by selecting the best applicants first and then screening only the final candidates. Following this, we will shortlist successful applicants and send out regret letters to unsuccessful applicants. Successful applicants will be shortlisted in a designated folder for you to review.

3. Tap into a bigger talent pool

Online recruitment platforms provide SMEs with access to sizeable databases that make headhunting easier. For example, Pnet's Direct Search functionality allows you to recruit proactively and headhunt the best candidates in a database of over three million jobseekers – reducing time-to-hire and allowing you to filter candidate profiles to a granular level to find an accurate match. However, it's important to note that searching the database directly may be extremely time consuming and time – for SMEs especially – is money. In searching for candidates directly, you may also reach passive candidates who would need some convincing to change jobs. When you place a job advert, on the other hand, you're more likely to connect with candidates who are actively looking for new career opportunities.

Whether you opt to invest in a job advert or simply search for candidates using an existing database, specialist online recruitment platforms will usually enable you to communicate with candidates directly, comment on candidate profiles, and send bulk letters of regret. Jobseekers hate being left 'hanging' and closing the loop will put your SME in a good light with Gen Y and Gen Z candidates ... even if they aren't successful in securing the position, at least they will feel heard and seen.

4. Showcase your SME with employer branding

Having the right employer branding in place is another great way to attract the Gen Y and Gen Z talent you're looking for because these candidates tend to have a thirst for information and an eagerness to learn and grow.

"We've seen clients who have an interesting, attractive and detailed Company Hubs page on the Pnet platform get better quality candidates and higher applications than those who don't", says Leandr  van der Merwe, customer success manager at Pnet. "In a competitive employment landscape, having the right employer branding in place enables you to set your SME business apart from the competition – even the seemingly 'safe' corporates! You can showcase your brand, your company values, growth opportunities, culture and available vacancies to attract the best candidates," Van der Merwe concludes.

Employer branding allows you to improve your brand presence, regardless of the size of your business. It creates a compelling connection to your services, benefits and culture. You can use employer branding to actively position your business, communicating the key features that make your offering unique, while showcasing benefits and services. From an SEO perspective, employer branding also contributes to your company ranking better on Google.

Attracting the best of South Africa's youth can be a daunting prospect for SMEs, yet hiring the right person for the job is critical to business success. As an SME owner, it is possible to enjoy a seamless recruitment process without having a dedicated HR or talent acquisition manager. Magic happens when specialist online recruitment platforms using world-class technology work with recruiters to attract the right job seekers to their vacancies.

Are you ready to make connections that work?

To find out how Pnet can help you with your SME recruitment efforts, contact us at: www.pnet.co.za | sales@pnet.co.za | +27 (10) 140 3099



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As a subsidiary of the StepStone Group and sister company to Universum, Pnet is the connector, the catalyst, and the ecosystem for opportunity. Creating, amplifying, and identifying opportunity. Pnet 'makes it possible to do great things'; it is where recruiters can find the talent to help them flourish, and jobseekers are given the opportunities that will help them find purpose,

meaning, and joy through their skills.

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