

How to cut the cost of job hunting for unemployed youth

Employers need to make it easier for young people to find jobs. That's the word from Lulaway CEO, Jake Willis, who says it costs job seekers about R550 a month in transport and administrative costs to actively search for a job in South Africa.



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Willis says [research](#) indicates that an average of R350 is spent on transport and R200 on internet costs and printing. “Young people who spend several months looking for jobs often exhaust their personal savings as well as every other channel open to them such as loans from family, friends or micro lenders[2].”

Willis notes that most organisations are aware of the importance of employing people who live close to the workplace. “This is because the risk of drop-off is much higher when employees have to spend a large percentage on their salary on transport.”

That being said, employers do not always consider how much it costs for job seekers to apply for jobs and attend interviews.

How can employers make it easier for job-seekers?

Willis suggests there are several creative ways companies can help reduce the costs related to applying for a job.

- Online advertising of job openings. Online job portals allow youth to find out about jobs without having to spend money on newspapers. It also gives them access to wider range of opportunities.
- Allow for online job applications. By allowing youth to apply for a job online, the transport and printing costs associated with delivering a CV to the office is eliminated.

- Where possible, conduct telephonic pre-screening to ensure unsuitable candidates are not invited to an interview.
- Consider conducting speed-interviewing events. Pioneered by Lulaway in the entry-level job environment, speed-interviewing allows companies to partner with other similar employers in the industry – or various branches or departments within the organisation – to interview several job seekers over a short period. Applicants can then be interviewed for several job openings, saving them hundreds of Rands in transport fees and providing a highly effective way for employers to screen several applicants at a time.
- Consider a central location outside of the company's premises to conduct interviews such as a local community hall. This will mean candidates don't have to travel to the interview and could coincide with a CSI initiative.
- Pay first-time employees their first month salary in weekly instalments to allow them to cover their transport costs.
- Combine hiring activities such as interviews and assessments into one day so that young work seekers only pay for one journey.
- Use the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and Gauteng City Region Academy's (GCRA) job creation databases. They include thousands of pre-screened work seekers with all the necessary documentation attached. These can often be accessed for free, saving both parties money, time and resources.

What can job-seekers do to keep job hunting costs down?

Willis suggests young people also investigate ways to ensure they don't spend too much money applying for jobs.

"Government bodies such as the NYDA and GCRA allow young people to apply for jobs for free. This involves going into their offices, which are usually centrally located, and completing an online application.

"Young people should also look out for career fairs, or career drives, organised by youth employment organisations in their communities to recruit people for certain programmes or projects. They can also read local newspapers and listen to local radio stations to find out about these types of opportunities, as well as follow companies like Lulaway on social media," adds Willis.

He also suggests job-seekers consider the following measures to optimise their job seeking activities:

- Research the company and potential job before spending money on travelling to an interview. Young people who know they don't want to work in a call centre or factory should not waste their time and money going to an interview.
- Maximise the value of social networks. Job seekers should ask friends and family members if there are any openings at their workplaces. A personal referral is often well received by employers. Job seekers will also be able to get a better feel for what the company is like and determine whether it is a good fit for them.
- Use online portals as much as possible. Youth can use free job portals to access dozens of job openings. Gumtree and Facebook constantly post new job openings. It is important to be smart and set up alerts that automatically inform job seekers when new jobs become available in certain locations or industries.
- Go local. Local government and non-profit organisations often conduct job creation initiatives in their community.
- Visit a one of Lulaway's 200 Job Centres around the country. Visit the Lulaway website to find out where your nearest Job Centre is located. Many of these job centres are subsidised, which means that registration is free and accessible to all.

- NYDA and GCRA Job Centres also offer young job seekers the chance to register on the Lulaway Job Seeker database for free.

Willis says Lulaway is acutely aware of the challenges faced by young people on the hunt for a job. “We are constantly on the lookout for ways to make the job seeking process easier, as well as for opportunities to partner with the public and private sectors in identifying and creating more jobs for the country’s youth.”

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