

Marriott growth creates opportunities for unemployed youth

The latest unemployment figures in South Africa, as announced by the Statistician-General earlier this year, creates a gloomy outlook for young South Africans seeking employment. The expanded rate of unemployment amounts to around 9 million people who could potentially be part of the workforce, according to the figures.



David Leman

But there are in fact numerous opportunities for South Africans to find work, especially for those willing to consider a move outside the country. And one company is looking to create up to 25,000 new jobs for those willing to travel.

According to David Leman, chief human resources officer, Middle East and Africa, Marriott International, “The Middle East and Africa region is seen as the new growth environment for business the world over. International business is turning its attention to the untapped markets that this region offers, and we are experiencing more opportunity on the African continent now than in previous decades.”

Need for new staff in new hotel properties

It is this sentiment that drives the growth strategy of Marriott International. “Marriott already has the largest footprint of hotels in the region with 150 properties in 19 countries,” Leman says. “A large number of these fall under the Protea Hotels by Marriott brand, which is represented in South Africa itself as well as in another eight countries in Africa.”

[Marriott International](#) has plans to add a further 93 hotels to its Middle-East and Africa portfolio by 2025. This growth plan means that there is a pressing need for additional staff to be identified and trained up to provide the skills needed to run the new hotel properties.

“By 2020 alone, we anticipate that the various new hotel openings will necessitate that 25,000 new jobs will be created,” Leman explains. “The bulk of these positions will be at entry level – not needing any previous specialist skills - and this will allow for thousands of South Africans potentially to become gainfully and sustainably employed.” Since Marriott International’s recruitment philosophy focuses on attitude over experience and the willingness to learn while employed, and not on tertiary education requirements, entry into the company is uncomplicated.

In some instances, employees will be able to help support families back home. According to Leman, “We’ve already seen that most of the young South Africans working for Marriott in Dubai, for instance, send funds back home to their families, offering a lifeline for a number of their family members in South Africa.”

“Ultimately,” Leman concludes, “Marriott and Protea Hotels by Marriott actively encourage young South Africans to look to us for employment opportunities. Working for a leading corporate of this size offers the chance of a lifetime – an opportunity for an international career.”

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