

Jump start your life with this handy guide

Eulalia Snyman

18 October 2007 at 06h00

There are two reasons why you should look at a career that is in demand in South Africa today: you will be much more likely to find a job and South Africa needs such skills to grow our economy and develop our country.

"According to the minister of labour, 60 percent of the approximately 400 000 youths that matriculate each year do not find employment or enrol for further study.

"Yet at the same time, South Africa is suffering from critical skills shortages in certain areas. Clearly many young people who can't find jobs have not had the opportunity to be trained in the scarce skills that are in great demand.

"With the right training, there are many opportunities for young people to find jobs.

"Furthermore, not all these jobs require a university education; many careers only need a certificate or diploma.

"Skilled people are the most precious commodity in an environment where economic growth depends on the success of industries such as manufacturing, mining, research, technology, construction and transport along with vital sectors such as education, health and finance.

"The more successful these sectors of our economy are, the more we will produce, the more people we can train, and the more jobs we can create.

"From the day we are born we journey down a path of life-long learning that links our education and training, our community involvement and our personal life. So, whatever our employment destination, there is more than one pathway to it.

"Your learning path will be unique but it is important that you understand what skills, experience and attributes you need to reach your destination.

"The careers in demand require some form of training, starting with a certificate or diploma, which will involve intensive practical training or moving on up to a university degree that will provide a stronger theoretical and academic background.

"You cannot hope to develop a career or skills that are in demand without the necessary training.

"Furthermore, the majority of careers in demand require a background in mathematics and science; these are crucial subjects that every student should select and study even if only for a limited period."

The above is an excerpt from the career guide and life skills manual, JumpStart, which is now available to matriculants across SA. What started off as a "bright idea", the guide is now in its fourth year of publication.

"When I discovered that my daughter at the age of 23 didn't know how to go about opening a bank account, I realised that there was a real need for a tool to help matrics cross the bridge to the other side, the world of the adult and the world of work," says Lewis Khoury, publisher of JumpStart.

According to Khoury, the learning process applies to not only the matriculants but their

families and the publishers of the guide.

"Every year we research and revise and revolutionise the content and design of JumpStart to ensure that it remains relevant and useful," he says.

No topic is regarded as "common knowledge", making the information comprehensive, yet offered in concise, neat "chunks".

How to obtain unemployment insurance, how tax works and how to manage stress are some of the topics addressed. Learners are guided on how to benefit from government initiatives managed by, for example, the National Youth Service and the Umsobomvu Youth Fund.

While Deloitte provided the information regarding careers that are in demand, tertiary education institutions advertise in JumpStart as well as private companies that have employment and/or training opportunities for the youth.

The workings of the sector education and training authorities (Setas) are elaborated on and a list of contact details is included.

Considering that the economy of the country affects every individual, regardless of age or status, the guide explains in plain terms the factors that shape the economy, such as inflation, interest rates, government spending, international trade and economic growth. Colourful pictures and diagrams make the guide visually pleasing and easy to read.

Supported by Deloitte, JumpStart is endorsed by the presidency, the department of education and the department of labour.

As Jumpstart is one those publications that elicit a "I wish I had one when I started out" responses from most people, The Star Workplace and JumpStart publishers will be giving away 20 copies of the guide every week for eight weeks. We will also feature some of the advice given therein in order to reach a broader audience.

JumpStart is distributed free of charge via the school system to South African Grade 12 learners and is not for sale.

To receive a copy for yourself or for a loved one, e-mail info@jumpstarthandbook.co.za before October 25.