



# YOUR PM

*...insight lead*

**TOP 5 TIPS FOR JOB SEARCH IN  
AFRICA, PART 1.**

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“Almost half of the 10 million graduates churned out of the over 668 universities in Africa yearly do not get jobs”, according to Kelvin Balogun, president of Coca-Cola, Central, East and West Africa. The International Labour Organization (ILO) further supports Balogun’s statement on unemployment with statistics which shows that the unemployment rate in 2017 in Sub-Saharan Africa was 7.2 per cent. The ILO further stated that unemployment rates are expected to increase in the coming years in Africa as more and more graduates come out every year from African universities. Aside graduates searching for jobs there are also other job seekers unemployed. The implication is that there are not enough jobs to cater for the number of graduates entering the job market as well as for those already in the market. This means lots of applicants for any given job and as a result, the employer has the upper hand when it comes to hiring. To the job seeker, it means the competition for jobs is fierce.

With the limited jobs available, and with thousands of job applicants with similar qualifications competing over vacancies in Africa, job searching in Africa has become a job in itself. OML Africa specializes in selection and assessment for recruiting companies. This means that we assess the competencies of job seekers for job fit. We also conduct skills assessments, competency tests, psychometric testing and so forth. We provide recruitment process outsourcing services to our clients so we are more than adept in the area of recruitment in Africa. We have compiled our top five tips in searching for a job in Africa for job seekers looking for ways to improve their job search skills.

### **Top 5 tips for job search**

#### **1. Do your homework**

Once you know the kind of job you want to do, the next thing is to do your homework. This involves finding out about the current qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience levels the job market is demanding as well as the salary levels. You need to research salary levels for your chosen field. If you are a graduate you need to focus on entry-level salaries and if you are a non-graduate you need to focus on the hiring rate for your level of experience. Please note that graduating from university with a degree is not a ticket to high salaries, failure to understand this point may cost you job opportunities. In Africa many recruiters do not share salary details on vacancies you will have to ask friends and family working in your chosen fields or salary calculators online not, these calculators are not 100% but give some indication at least. If you can get your hands-on market salary surveys that would also be good. If you are lucky to have an effective careers office at your university you can ask them. You also need to do your research on recruitment agencies, job boards and the companies you would like to work. Once you have completed your research then you can begin your job search activities. It’s also a good idea to do a self-assessment on your skills and then work to improve your weak areas. Most employers are looking for candidates with a good level of soft skills like problem-solving, communication skills, interpersonal skills etc. So, find out the soft skills relevant to your chosen field of work and improve on them if necessary.

#### **2. Develop a plan of action**

Most job seekers usually just start looking for jobs without a plan of action. Planning gives you a focus and a way to measure your progress as you can regularly review how you are doing against your plan. The plan should contain targets and actions to be performed on a monthly or weekly basis. In your plan, you should

have a hitlist for companies to send your CV, as well as job boards, recruitment agencies, social networks, family and friends list. You should set weekly or monthly targets. So, you may set a target, for example, to send five CVs to five companies on your hitlist per week, check the job boards on your list every other day, check-in with your recruitment agency once a week, check your list of newspapers every day etc. Most recruitment agencies will charge you a registration fee to register with them so pick ones that are reputable and are likely to help you secure a job.

### **3. Be proactive**

Some job seekers are not proactive and can develop an expectant attitude. By this we mean they do little to nothing but expect to land a job. To get a job you need to be a proactive job seeker. Identifying and registering with top job boards to receive job notifications does not end there. Some recruitment agencies at a fee offer mock job interview assessments, review CVs, help you to improve your employability skills, provide career advice etc. So, visit your agency or find out about their job seekers services and tap into them. You can also apply for internships or volunteer as a way into a company and once there make yourself relevant by working hard. Be prepared to work for nothing when applying for internships, work placements and volunteering roles in your chosen field. Usually, companies would provide an allowance for travel and food but others may offer nothing but the opportunity to learn and develop your skills. Either way, it's an opportunity to get a job. You should track your activities by creating a tracker in Excel to track your job search activities, most importantly to keep track of job applications, this should include a record of all the jobs you apply. You should save job adverts, job descriptions/requirements with adverts for future reference. This is important because you can use the information to prepare for interviews when you are invited for an interview. There is nothing more annoying than calling a candidate for an interview only to discover they have forgotten about their application; some recruiters are known to strike candidates of their list in such cases.



### **4. Effectively manage your social media and networks**

Social media is not just for socializing its now being used by recruiters to hire people and is also being used by our friends and family to share job opportunities. So, your social media is a great place to search for jobs. However, you should adopt a strategic approach. LinkedIn is the social media platform for businesses and many recruiters advertise and headhunt for candidates on the platform. You should create a LinkedIn profile which is basically your CV. You should also join recruiter groups to widen your search. Many jobs are posted in groups and also personal posts. You can also follow the companies on your hitlist on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter if they have accounts. WhatsApp has also become a place people share jobs in groups so perhaps you can work your networks and request to be added to viable groups. It is amazing what you can achieve when you start to use your networks, these can be church, clubs, associations, groups, friends and family. Let your network know you are looking for work and ask those you know to inform you of opportunities.

You can also identify people in your network who can help you. We want to emphasize that you need to work on building goodwill with people before you go asking for job referrals. You should see how you can be of help to people in your network too. Most importantly, clean your social media. You should manage your social media and be careful about what you post. What do you post on social media about your life? Currently, some recruiters go the extra mile of researching the social media profile of potential candidates. The information they gather about you may influence whether you are invited for an interview. on social media can affect your success in searching for a job. From experience, as recruiters most of the jobs out there are not advertised but are rather filled through referrals, recommendations, headhunting or whom-you-know.

### **5. Look for a career, not a job.**

The probability of giving up on your dream job for just any job becomes high when your job search is not yielding the necessary results. Most candidates, as a result, end up apply for every job or doing any job. This affects the career reasoning on their CV and the likelihood of them getting the job they want. Additionally, most candidates get the job they want but perhaps maybe not I the company they want or the salary package is not at the level they want so they turn it down or they take the job and then leave it when they find another job only to regret later on. A career job means sticking around for at least three years to develop skills, knowledge and experience in your chosen field. Also, many employers are looking for candidates seeking career jobs because these types of candidate tend to stay I their roles longer. As a result, by the time they leave the company they have enough good experience to command better jobs and salary benefits,

In summary, looking for a job in Africa is not easy and is a job I itself but with some persistence, dedication and perseverance you can get a job. Doing some of these activities will help you on your search journey. In Africa recommendations, referrals and whom you know is still very much in practice. However, even whom-you-know has become competitive. Another essential point is that it is essential that whilst you are searching for a job you keep your skills up to date through extra curriculum activities and programs.



## **Separate the wheat from the chaff!**

**By hiring the right people for the right job the right way with OML Africa**



Phone us: **0302973379**  
Email us: [enquiries@omlafrica.com](mailto:enquiries@omlafrica.com)  
Visit us: [www.omlafrica.com](http://www.omlafrica.com)