

Simplify.hr Job Trends Report indicates strong growth in key industries

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Key industries continue to hold their own with a positive knock-on impact on employment.

"The more things change, the more they remain the same." Originally coined by French writer Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr in the 1800s, this sentiment still rings true. With the devastation of the Covid-19 pandemic still rife and South Africa's current unemployment rate sitting at 34.4% , it is heartening to see resilience and growth across some of our country's key sectors.

A recent article listing the top 10 fastest growing industries in South Africa listed the following sectors, in no particular order - Finance & Banking, Communications and IT, Transport and Logistics, Mining, Agriculture & Agro-processing, Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare, Insurance, Real Estate, Automobile, Fashion & Beauty - all industries that are key to South Africa's growth and development.

Recent employment figures from Simplify.hr - drawn from an analysis of jobs published online on job boards and corporate career sites that allow for insights and comparisons on a national scale, highlights three specific industries in the above-mentioned top 10.

Marc Privett, General Manager at Simplify.hr says: "Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare, Communications and IT as well as Transport and Logistics are all showing a significant increase in employment figures when compared to last year this time, despite the fact that the global pandemic and a depressed economy, amongst other things, remain consistent influencers."

Of the three, Transport & Logistics has shown the greater increase from 2020 at 41% followed by Pharmaceutical & Healthcare (38%) and Communications and IT (17%).

"The reasons are manyfold. Yes, the demands of Covid-19 with regards to distribution, healthcare, and remote working, et. al has very likely influenced employment demand," continues Privett, "however certain industries consistently have a higher resource requirement than others."

This is due, in part, to market demand flowing from the very nature of the role these industries play and the requirements they fulfil. Recent reports confirmed South Africa's pharmaceutical market as the largest in sub-Saharan Africa, with total pharmaceutical expenditure estimated to be \$4.1 billion and that "it will see substantial growth over the long term" . A glimpse into the South African healthcare industry by RH Bopelo says that "there is no doubt that South Africa's healthcare industry is one of the most dynamic sectors in the world."

The same holds true for Communications and IT, with the ICT sector having proven itself as the backbone of many economies - both developed and developing. Recent reports by ICASA (Independent Communications Authority of South Africa - 2020 and 2021) state that "the telecommunications sector is a critical part of modern lifestyles and has significant influence on the growth of the country's economy as it strengthens productivity levels" and that "South Africa's telecommunications sector has continued to grow despite the economic challenges faced by the nation." It goes on to indicate that despite the impact of Covid-19 and its impact on virtually every aspect of our lives and the economy that, "even so, it is clear that under current conditions, some businesses may become more critical to our lives and could face an increase in demand, such as in the case of the ICT sector."

When it comes to South Africa's Transport & Logistics industry, a recent article by Price Waterhouse Coopers that discusses future prospects in Africa for transportation and logistics, states that "South Africa tops the list for having the

most developed transport and logistics sector in Sub-Saharan Africa placing it on a par with some of the world's industrialised countries and that South Africa is also regarded as the best performer in Africa when it comes to trade facilitation logistics and among the best in terms of transport infrastructure." It further indicates that , "... due to advancing globalisation, declining trade barriers and an increasingly mobile workforce, the transport and logistics industry continues to enjoy above-average growth."

"It is clearly evident that, irrespective of economic hardship and the economic impact of the last two years as well as other societal factors - certain industries and 'job types' will always be in demand due to a country's need and requirements," says Privett.

Although not listed in South Africa's top 10 fastest growing industries, citing the same employment data, Privett goes on to list other industries showing similar employment growth in comparison to last year this time: Construction (42%), Consultancy (59%), Legal (36%), Marketing/ Media (42%), Production/ Manufacturing (46%) and Science/ Research (54%).

"These numbers are encouraging," continues Privett. "An increase in employment leads to increased earnings. This, in turn, has a ripple effect on consumer spending, positively benefitting other businesses and resulting in a healthier economy overall."

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