

VOLUNTEERING AS A MEANS TO GAIN EXPERIENCE

In sharp contrast to countries such as the US, Japan or the UK, South Africa has never established a strong tradition of volunteering.

Volunteering is one of the best kept secrets. Ideally, learners should start volunteering while still at school. Volunteering provides a wonderful opportunity to acquire both hard and soft skills at no financial cost and it is invaluable for networking and enhancing your job prospects.

Often overlooked is the fact that prospective employers are likely to be very impressed by a candidate's willingness to give back. Social responsibility is part of the business fabric today. The fact that these candidates have demonstrated their willingness to give back means that they are likely to be amenable to getting involved in company social responsibility initiatives.

Matriculants are spoilt for choice when it comes to volunteering: Candidates should approach hospitals, small businesses, sole proprietors, schools, old age homes, libraries, NGOs, animal shelters or churches. They should volunteer their services, in exchange for the opportunity to learn.

Experience gained that could be of value to an organisation including skill gained from volunteering should be added to your CV. It goes without saying that your CV should be typed, well set out, easy to follow, truthful, brief and error free.