



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **How Can “Generation Y” Adapt to Beat the Downturn?**

Current Generation Y graduates and first jobbers - those born between the late 1970's and 2000 - are currently badly affected by limited job availability and staff reductions. In times of recession the phrase 'last in first out' seems to ring true for many organisations. Generation Y have never experienced a recession so the current economic downturn may come as a shock. With businesses re-assessing both current and forecasted staffing levels in the present economic downturn, it is inevitable that younger workers are most likely to find themselves jobless.

Jan Coetzee, Managing Director for Manpower South Africa comments: “To ‘Generation Y’, the years of university study should be enough to secure employment, but in current economic conditions a degree is no longer the meal ticket that it used to be. Having traditionally expected a lot from employers, such as an appropriate work / life balance and evidence of a commitment to CSR, the reality of the jobs market will come as a real shock.”

With the turbulent times likely to persist in the foreseeable future, job options are both lessening and changing to keep up with employers changing needs. Some businesses have made high profile and aggressive cuts across their workforce but, as the situation stabilises, temporary roles will increase. Employers are more likely to take a “wait and see” approach when hiring permanent staff until such time the market picks up.

Coetzee adds: “Permanent recruitment is a costly process, and although the job market will be flooded with candidates over the next several months, employers will look to a temporary workforce as a bridge to permanent hires until such time that the economic climate settles. ‘Generation Y’ should consider temporary roles that will enable them to stay active in the marketplace and maintain an edge over fellow jobseekers – many of whom will have more actual work experience. Temporary roles offer many of the same benefits as permanent employment, such as holiday and sick pay, as well as vital exposure to different industry sectors.”



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In this increasingly competitive marketplace, employers will look favourably on job seekers who keep their CV up-to-date and use initiative to increase both their skills and on-the-job experience. Volunteer work, either in here or abroad, will also be favourably looked on as an indicator of being a hard worker as it shows an ambition to succeed.

“Unfortunately, many employers will turn Generation Y applicants down in favour of a candidate that has actual work experience under their belts. But a sensible employer will see the value of taking on junior members of staff on work experience placements or assignments, as there is limited risk and a low level of commitment on their part,” concludes Coetzee.

Generation Y should also be open to working in industry sectors that wouldn't necessarily be considered a glamorous first option. At present, employers in the utilities sector remain positive about hiring in the first six months of 2009, and opportunities also exist within the public sector. Although these may not be sectors that first spring to mind with Generation Y, being open minded and gaining work experience in other fields will enable longer term career goals to be achieved.

Manpower offers these top tips to young job seekers:-

**Temporary work** – Temporary work can be a highly lucrative means of employment, and one that offers variety and flexibility to individuals. Temporary workers are also traditionally more appealing to employers during times of recession so job seekers should take advantage of this trend.

**Adapt expectations** - Try to keep an open mind when applying for jobs and don't limit yourself: jobseekers no longer have the luxury of being choosy as it is very much an 'employers market' out there.

**Work experience** - Consider work experience opportunities as a foot-in-the-door to your chosen industry. It shows an eagerness to succeed and a commitment to learn. You may have to sacrifice a disposable income for the short-term but the long-term benefits will pay you back ten-fold.

**Up-skill** - Consider retraining so that you maximise your employment options. Many companies such as Manpower offer free training which is an ideal option for those keen to maintain a competitive edge.



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### **About Manpower South Africa**

Manpower South Africa is the local subsidiary of Manpower Inc. (NYSE: MAN), a world leader in the employment services industry. Celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008, the \$22 billion Manpower Inc. offers employers a range of services for the entire employment and business cycle including permanent, temporary and contract recruitment; employee assessment and selection; training; outplacement; outsourcing and consulting. Manpower's worldwide network of 4,400 offices in 82 countries and territories enables the company to meet the needs of its 400,000 clients per year, including small and medium size enterprises in all industry sectors, as well as the world's largest multinational corporations. The focus of Manpower's work is on raising productivity through improved quality, efficiency and cost-reduction across their total workforce, enabling clients to concentrate on their core business activities.

Manpower South Africa was established in 1999, and since inception, has built the reputation as an expert talent acquisition and staffing provider in the Finance, Engineering, IT, Office Support, and Industrial sectors. Manpower South Africa currently operates 19 specialist branches across South Africa.