

# Why a flexible workforce is essential to helping hospitality and tourism recover

Hospitality and tourism were the hardest-hit industry sectors by the Covid-19 pandemic. During the lockdown, these businesses were unable to operate at all, and many did not survive this initial phase. Recovery over the past two years has been slow, hindered by frequent changes to regulations as well as feelings of unease and uncertainty.

Now that South Africa has done away with the requirement for mask wearing and lifted all Covid-19 restrictions, the industry can begin a return to pre-pandemic levels. However, uncertainty about the future remains, so a flexible workforce is a key component of this recovery.



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## Back in business

Since restrictions have been lifted, there has been a definite uptick in business in the hospitality sector. Notably, there are several major happenings on the cards for later in 2022 and early 2023, including international sporting events and concerts with famous global artists. This will in turn have a positive influence on other areas of hospitality, including hotels, local tourism, and catering.

The reality, however, is that international travel remains inconsistent due to ongoing uncertainty and disruptions. The pandemic is not the only element at play, and several macroeconomic factors, including economic turbulence and political action, continue to have an impact.

In addition, on a more micro-level, recovery is not linear or a simple matter. Every area, from restaurants and coffee shops to local travel, accommodation, events, and catering, were negatively impacted and continue to be as people have less disposable income than before.

## Flexibility is the key

With major events planned and more to come, there is a rise in demand for workers within hospitality, but the lingering uncertainty makes it difficult for businesses in the sector to hire back the full, permanent, full-time staff complement of the pre-pandemic world. The nature of the industry is project-based to start with, and with the future impossible to predict, ensuring that staffing is at the right level always becomes a challenge.

A flexible workforce is essential to enable hospitality businesses to access the skills they need to support operational requirements, but without the overheads that permanent employment brings. This allows for staffing to scale up or down as necessary to cater to fluctuating demand with reduced risk. Temporary Employment Services (TES) providers can deliver this flexibility, allowing hospitality businesses to operate at optimal capacity regardless of the uncertainty of current times.

## **Reputation is everything**

Using the services of a reputable TES provider not only ensures that staffing can flex to meet changing needs, but also reduces admin around the hiring process, including vetting and skills matching as well as ongoing human resources requirements. All staff will also be compliant with regulatory requirements for specific industries, will have the necessary skills and qualifications for the various positions, and will benefit from greater job security as the TES partner will be able to offer different contracts as needs arise.

Hospitality is a critical sector in the South African economy, and now that restrictions have finally been lifted, the recovery of the industry can begin in earnest. Given the unpredictability of the current global climate, however, the ability to maintain a flexible workforce is critical to both recovery and future success. The right TES partner is instrumental.

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