

Rebuilding SA: The opportunity for businesses to leave a lasting legacy

By [Lizelle Strydom](#)

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While the recent unrest seen in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng has been damaging to the local economy, businesses and communities have come together to rebuild and restart operations. However, there is a need for a more conscious effort to provide job opportunities for youth and women in order to drive sustainable growth and for businesses to leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.



Lizelle Strydom, managing director at CareerBox. | Source: Supplied

It is well known that the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector in KZN was hard hit, resulting in disruption to operations and a negative impact on service delivery, but the industry has bounced back strongly.

Rebuilding the BPO sector

Companies from around the world have taken to outsourcing and trust local BPO operators with providing their clients with services, in some cases end-to-end sales and support for certain products or services.

As such, it has been vital for local BPO operators to restore operations and to do so quickly. This included providing temporary accommodation for staff that is closer to their place of work and increasing on-premise security for contact centre staff to safely return to work.

We have to demonstrate the resilience of our people and our infrastructure and work harder to rebuild investor confidence in our country. After all, [South Africa was only recently ranked the most favoured BPO offshoring destination in 2021](#) in the annual *Front Office BPO Omnibus Survey*.

Communities have been coming together to rebuild, and we cannot let the acts of a few prevent us from aiming to achieve our goals.



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Harnessing high growth industries

Not only is the BPO industry one of the few to show continued growth and investment despite sluggish economic activity over the past few years, it is also one of the few sectors that can help South Africa address the problem of high unemployment among youth and women.

You don't need academic qualifications or even prior workplace experience, but rather a driving determination to better yourself and by extension, your family and community.

Organisations such as CareerBox take this raw ambition and turn these women and youth into dependable, employable citizens. This includes placing them through high-demand skills development training programmes designed to equip them with the skills and abilities needed to be successful in the workplace and then placing them with corporate partners.

These are not just job positions but a chance at a sustainable career that includes progression. Dispelling the stereotype, call centres are modern environments where the focus is not simply on sales but on providing better service to clients.



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Beyond positions as call centre agents, those joining the industry have the opportunity to progress in roles as varied as human resources, IT and finance, areas that many industry entrants might not even think about.

Working in the BPO industry prepares individuals for the broader world of work, instils a high work ethic and equips them with transferable skills that are invaluable in any type of business across industries.

Taking steps to leave a legacy

In order to provide opportunities for broader portions of the population, local and global private and public sector organisations are increasingly making impact sourcing a requirement to doing business with them.

This is a business practice where organisations look toward previously disadvantaged communities to identify and develop high potential talent and then place them in jobs that provide them with a sustainable income and pathway to social upliftment.



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Work done by CareerBox and the Rockefeller Foundation has shown that the cost of impact sourcing to business was comparable to or even lower than traditional methods with additional benefits including higher levels of employee motivation, fewer employee disputes and much lower attrition rates.

It is critical, however, that companies adopt this practice because they have a vested interest in seeing it succeed rather than as a tick box exercise. Impact sourcing is not just about cheap labour, far from it. It is about developing people to provide the highest levels of service to clients and providing them with an opportunity at a long-term career.

SA has the potential to leave a lasting positive impact

Being able to fully understand the positive socio-economic impact of their investment on people and communities will give them purpose and encourage them to do even more. South Africa, and South Africans, has tremendous potential and we cannot let the actions of a few ruin it for 60 million people.

We have proven ourselves to be resilient people over and over again. Our people and their ability to keep adapting and improving are our key assets. This is the time to move forward.

Beyond simply creating jobs, it is about creating a new legacy that will have a positive impact on the generations to come.

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