

Why Employers shun local graduates

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I asked this question to my connections on LinkedIn and I got interesting responses. Concerns raised by employers regarding the poor quality of graduates [on average] coming out of our local Universities. What do you think is the cause.

1. Poor Lecturer quality
2. Damage done in primary and secondary schools
3. Universities deviated from their mandate. I share some of the responses below

Local employers have a preference when it comes to hiring graduate trainees and other graduate entry-level roles. When we assist them to hire graduates we sometimes get a lot of conditions that we must take into consideration as we shortlist the candidates. These conditions are normally not put on the advert but the recruiter will be briefed on what they require. I put together the comments I received on my social media handles when I posed a question on the preference of foreign-educated graduates than local ones. Here are the responses #

#1. “My response is biased towards the tech sector. Something I’ve noticed over the years is how Zimbabwean's tend to be "paper-educated" with very little ability to take what they've ingested to apply it in real life. The majority of this is likely due to their relying on exam dumps and not practical experience.”

#2. “This is what we nurture in our children from nursery school, in fact, our whole education system is geared towards achieving the "amazing paper results". Grade seven goals = 5 units to get into the so-called best secondary school, high school = straight "A'S" for O levels after which a child is to achieve as many points as possible presumably for tertiary education. Education is important yes but what’s the point of having 20 or 30 points at A level when tertiary schools do not require so many, further which company will ask how many points you achieved at A level? Worse still we now live in a world where getting a job is more than just getting your first degree rather further education and more importantly which business school you graduate from. To throw further spanners into the wheel the most successful business people in the world and even the richest do not have these paper qualifications!!! So where are we getting it wrong?”

#3. “There is no research by Universities on the industry requirements. Most degrees available at a number of Universities are driven by the need by such universities to make money other than addressing industry needs. Due to global changes, some of the degrees are outdated and no longer addresses the current situations.”

#4. “Most employers recruit in accordance with nepotism and networks not in accordance with merit. If employers were to go back to the founding principles in recruitment, they would easily pick up quality

graduates.”

5. “For me, it is none of the above rather it's a result of social and moral decadence. There is nothing motivating for young people to attend universities. No role models to talk of who made it after going to university. As such the young boys and girls just go through university as a requirement or social expectation when they get jobs rather than working their way up they are pre-occupied with looking for loopholes in the system that can make them a quick buck.”

#6. “I think the way the education and assessment of knowledge attained at school/universities is structured is a major issue. It encourages the 'Cram pass and forget ' system which is somehow accepted as the norm. No real depth of applicable knowledge can be attained this way. I suggest a real Frank evaluation of the current system is required.”

#7. “I am not surprised. I have noted renowned firms globally are no longer considering one's qualifications in their recruitment criteria, there is a reason. For me its intuition, versatility and creative abilities inherent in an individual. Sadly, our interview systems have not focused on identifying these qualities. “

#8. “On a serious note though, the entry requirements for university are now very lax. Whereas a generation ago only the best students could make it, now anyone can go to one of the 20 or so varsities in the country. To add to the problem, these universities are underfunded hence poor resources to give students practical skills. Even textbooks are not adequate. “

#9. “It is mainly laziness. Remember many students pay lecturers to get a pass. Kids nowadays want things on a silver platter. “

#10: I think corporates don't have time to coach, mentor, and train anymore. With that in mind they have set the bar so high for graduates and their expectations of them are just too much, so much that when they fail to deliver they blame it on the learning institutions and not their induction and onboarding policies. Maybe if organizations also share how they've done a skills transfer initiative and the graduates still fail to impress it might help put things into perspective.”

#11. “I agree with this because just about every other graduate in Zim does the industrial attachment. That is our chance to coach them in the right direction. I definitely know I learnt a lot during my attachment, I was exposed to a lot of what I would then do. Exposure to the business environment and business decision is key. Most people join the work environment with no idea of accountability or responsibility when it comes to working and that's probably where they lose it.”

#12. “We should accept that stereotyping will always be there. That's why University culture is an important thing. This may be up to the universities to sort out. It's like how in America, even though the Ivy League colleges exist, some organizations want to recruit from the same college because of cultural issues. This is a silent factor but we all behave a certain way when we have been to the same college. Our organization houses a boatload of attachees annually and I can confirm that over the years the culture issues are the same. even with degree programs (not sure if this is a lecturer thing) but some

varsities churn out good graduates in specific practices.”

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