

# Jobs

## Getting Ahead

*Work joyfully and peacefully,  
knowing that right thoughts  
and right efforts will invariably  
bring about right results.*

– James Allen



PHOTO: NATION LIBRARY

# How not to be trapped in chasing jobs for a career

PERSISTENT ATTEMPTS TO WORK FOR A BLUE CHIP COMPANY CAN BE SELF-DESTRUCTIVE, WARNS **CHARLES OTIENO**

It's six years since James started on a mission to secure employment in one of Kenya's most reputable manufacturing firms.

He has done all kinds of professional courses to obtain certificates he had gathered were popular with the big company.

James has so far spent a few hundreds of thousands of shillings in pursuit of his dream job. Recently, he took another loan to finance his next training.

James is fatigued, but he is not relenting in his struggles to leave the small firm he works for and join the blue chip company he has set his eyes on.

He is a classic example of a career chaser — the kind of professional who will limitlessly chase the childhood dream job to old age.

This story illustrates the attitude that is rendering many professionals broke and frustrated out of the exaggerated belief that one only attains professional self-

actualisation upon securing employment with the "ultimate employer", usually the large company that has made a brand out of its name.

Professionally, there is nothing wrong with working hard towards realising a dream job. But there is a problem with sticking with a fixed mind towards one career ambition, which is what career chasers do.

The seeds for such a mentality are usually sowed in school. Many graduates come out of college or university with the fixed mind that by virtue of their training, they can only do a "real" job in a firm whose name is worth carrying around.

With the set mind, they perceive all the other opportunities as mere stepping-stones to their dream employer.

And as time goes, they return to colleges and universities to chase further training. What starts as a simple gesture towards acquiring more knowledge becomes

a habit that is not particularly meant to benefit the present employer, but to chase the perceived bigger company.

In other words, they will be busy looking for certificates not to improve their present jobs but to chase other opportunities, preferably in a bigger firm. It is this chase that earns them the title of career chasers.

Those who don't realise their big employment dreams become frustrated. They keep doing one diploma or degree after another with the belief that more studies will do the trick. Do you feel trapped in such a situation?

To get out, it is important to appreciate the difference between need-driven training and job-driven studies.

The distinction can be illustrated by studying the issue from both the employer and the employee points of view.

A small company can be described as one that hasn't developed an

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## Graduate

### New book stresses the need to flaunt soft skills

**S**mart Job seeker is a locally written book that provides guidance on how to find a dream job in the present market.

The book recognises that it takes much more than just a CV to have a successful job search, and advises fresh graduates and other job seekers to flaunt their soft skills, which have become popular considerations by employers.

The book is written by Mr Wainaina Wanjiku, who contends that while there has been a boom in classroom education, soft skills have not been given due attention.

Wainaina is a career consultant with Corporate Staffing Services, a firm that offers guidance to job seekers. "In their quest to expand, universities and colleges need to understand that it also in their interest when students are successful," he says.

While career guidance departments exist in many educational institutions, students barely make use of them. Besides, the increasing student numbers have challenged their capacity, according to Wainaina.

Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance, and career prospects.

Unlike hard skills, which tend to be specific to a certain type of task or activity, soft skills are broadly applicable, and companies are more than before looking out for soft skills during recruitment.

The central message in Wainaina's book is that hard skills will get you an interview, but you need soft skills to get and keep the job.

In looking for employment, fresh graduates and people seeking alternative employment need to be aware of prevailing facts in the job market so that their efforts are more productive.

Smart Job seeker, says the author, was written to cater for the increasing demand for guidance in job search. That's the reason the book also explains why many job seekers never go beyond the interview stage. It gives some tried and tested job search techniques. Suggestions range from the traditional to the creative.

The book suggests that done properly, networking is the least expensive form of job

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