

# The South African's Guide to Landing a Remote Job in 2026

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What employers actually look for, how to stand out,  
and how to use HireSA to get hired.

*Written by Mathew, Founder of HireSA*

Based on 1,000+ employer conversations

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# The game has changed

I've been on both sides of the aisle. As a job seeker, there was a point where I was endlessly applying to jobs. And for months all I was receiving was the dreaded "We regret to inform you we will not be moving forward with your application. Wishing you all the best" email. It was discouraging and disheartening. Until I realized the problem was the types of jobs I was applying to. I didn't have access to good opportunities or the opportunities were just too competitive. But for the past two years I've been fortunate enough to help some of the best companies around the world hire South African talent.

After 1,000+ conversations with employers, I know exactly what employers look for in candidates, and exactly what candidates need to do in order to get hired.

That gives me a perspective most people don't have into the job market. I understand the psychology of the employer: what they actually care about, what makes them click on a profile, what makes them pass.

And here's what surprised me the most: there's a massive disconnect between what candidates put their effort into and what employers actually look for. Candidates spend 90% of their energy on things employers no longer care about and the remaining 10%, the stuff that actually moves the needle, they breeze over like it's an afterthought.

So I built HireSA with those high-signal things in mind. The platform is designed to help you showcase exactly what employers are looking for, in the way they want to see it.

But first, let me be honest with you about what the market looks like right now.

South Africa is the underground secret among businesses in the US, UK, and Australia. The timezone overlap, the English fluency, the work ethic. Employers who've hired SA talent don't go back. But the problem is there's been no good platform that puts South African professionals first in order to connect with amazing opportunities. That's the gap HireSA fills. Direct-hire. No middlemen. You keep 100% of your salary.

But you still need to stand out. And after a thousand employer conversations, I can tell you exactly what separates the candidates who get hired from the ones who don't.

## The truth is:

First impressions are everything. Most candidates wait until the interview to make an impression, and then fumble it because they're nervous or unprepared. Why leave it to chance? A 60-second pre-recorded intro video lets you make a great first impression on your own terms, on your own time. More on this in Chapter 03.

Versatility beats any single skill. Employers hiring remote workers aren't looking for someone who can do one thing. They want someone who can learn fast, wear multiple hats, and figure things out without being told exactly how. If you can demonstrate that you pick things up quickly, you'll beat candidates with more specific experience every time.

Communication, communication, communication. This came up in nearly every employer conversation I had. Can this person write clearly? Can they explain their thinking? Can they give updates without being asked? Remote work lives and dies on communication. It's not a nice-to-have, it's the skill.

AI fluency is the new dividing line. Employers in 2026 are not asking "do you use AI?" They're asking "how do you use AI?" If you're using tools like ChatGPT, Claude, or Copilot to work faster and smarter, say so. If you're not, start. This is quickly becoming the line between candidates who get interviews and candidates who don't.

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# Know what you bring to the table

Before you start applying to anything, it's important to get clear on what you really want. Not everyone has a linear career path. I didn't. I went from being a content writer for a non-profit in Florida, to a business analyst at a startup, took a brief stint as a solo traveler, to building my career at a remote recruiting agency.

It took me a few tries to figure out what I'm really good at. But oftentimes, the people who've worked with us know our skills the best. So I encourage you to ask 3-5 of your former managers, colleagues, mentors, and friends what they think you're really great at.

The truth is employers aren't just looking for someone who can do the job. They're looking for someone who can own the job, take initiative, and add value from day one.

Communication mastery. I cannot overstate this. After a thousand employer conversations, communication is the single most common reason a candidate gets hired or doesn't. This means writing clearly, speaking confidently on video calls, giving proactive updates without being asked, and knowing how to flag problems early instead of hiding them. If you can communicate well in a remote setting, you are already ahead of 80% of candidates globally. If you're struggling with building rapport, I encourage you to study Neuro Linguistic Programming. [Here's more about it.](#)

Work ethic that speaks for itself. Employers who have hired South African talent before almost always come back for more. The feedback I hear consistently is that SA professionals bring a can-do positive attitude. You don't need to be told what to do every morning. You take ownership. That reputation is your competitive edge.

Problem-solving, not just task execution. This is a big one, and it's where South African professionals separate themselves from candidates in other markets. Employers aren't looking for someone to follow a checklist. They want someone who can think strategically, identify problems before they're told about them, and propose solutions. If you've ever looked at a broken process and thought "there's a better way to do this", that instinct is exactly what employers are paying for. Lead with it.

You generate revenue. A large number of roles on HireSA are in sales, business development, and client-facing functions. Employers hiring for these roles are thinking about one thing: ROI. If you can show that you've directly contributed to revenue such as closed deals, grown accounts, hit targets, you become one of the lowest-risk hires an employer can make. Even if your role isn't directly in sales, think about how your work connects to the bottom line and make that connection explicit.

**Know these strengths. Lead with them in your profile, your intro video, and your interviews.**

## Build a profile that gets noticed

On HireSA, your profile is your first impression. Employers browse candidates before they ever post a job. A complete, well-crafted profile doesn't just make you visible, it dramatically increases your chances of being endorsed directly to employers. Incomplete or generic profiles get skipped. Profiles that showcase your strengths get put in front of hiring managers.

**HireSA is less likely to endorse you to employers if your profile is incomplete.**

**Here's what a strong profile looks like:**

Record a standout intro video. This is the single most powerful thing you can do on HireSA. A 60-second video lets you control your first impression instead of leaving it to chance in a live interview. Employers consistently tell me that a great intro video is what makes them reach out.

But here's the flip side: a bad video is worse than no video. A shaky phone recording with poor audio and a messy background creates a negative first impression that's hard to recover from.

Invest in this. You don't need a studio, but you do need: a high-quality camera (most modern smartphones are fine if you clean the lens and use the rear camera), a proper microphone (a \$30 lapel mic makes a huge difference, built-in laptop mics sound terrible), good lighting (face a window or buy a ring light), and a clean, professional background (a plain wall or a tidy bookshelf — no unmade beds, no kitchen clutter).

Record it multiple times. Watch it back. Ask a friend to review it. This is your handshake with every employer on the platform. Make it count.

Professional headshot. It doesn't need to be a studio photo. Clean background, good lighting, and you looking approachable. No sunglasses (this isn't Tinder), no group shots.

Headline that sells. "Executive Assistant" tells me nothing. "Executive Assistant | 5 years supporting C-suite execs | Calendar, travel, inbox zero" tells me everything. Be specific.


Bio that tells a story. Two to three paragraphs. Who you are, what you've done, what you're looking for. Write it like you're introducing yourself to a future boss at a coffee shop – professional but human. Mention the tools and AI platforms you use daily. Show your versatility and ability to learn quickly. If you've worn multiple hats in previous roles, say so – employers love that.

Skills that match. Tag the skills employers are actually searching for. Look at job postings in your field and mirror the language they use.

Salary in USD. This is important. Employers on HireSA are in the US, UK, and Australia. Set your expected monthly salary in dollars so there's no confusion.

### HireSA candidate profile — as seen by employers

Employer's view of your profile



**John Smith**  
Sales Development Representative  
Cape Town, South Africa

ASKING SALARY	EMPLOYMENT	EXPERIENCE	AVAILABILITY
\$2,500 / monthly	full-time	7 yrs	Immediately

**Results-driven SDR with B2B SaaS sales experience specializing in outbound prospecting and pipeline generation.**

I have built and managed outbound sales pipelines for two high-growth SaaS startups, consistently exceeding quota by 25-40%. My core skills include cold calling, cold email outreach, CRM management (HubSpot and Salesforce), lead qualification, and sales process optimization. I am looking for a full-time remote role with a US or UK company where I can contribute to revenue growth and eventually move into a sales management position.

**HOBBIES & PASSIONS**  
Trail running in Table Mountain National Park, learning guitar, and volunteering at local youth entrepreneurship programs.

[LinkedIn](#) [Portfolio](#)

Sales Customer Success & Service Marketing

**The bottom line: a complete profile with a strong intro video is the highest-leverage thing you can do on this platform. Every section you fill out increases your chances of being endorsed to employers.**

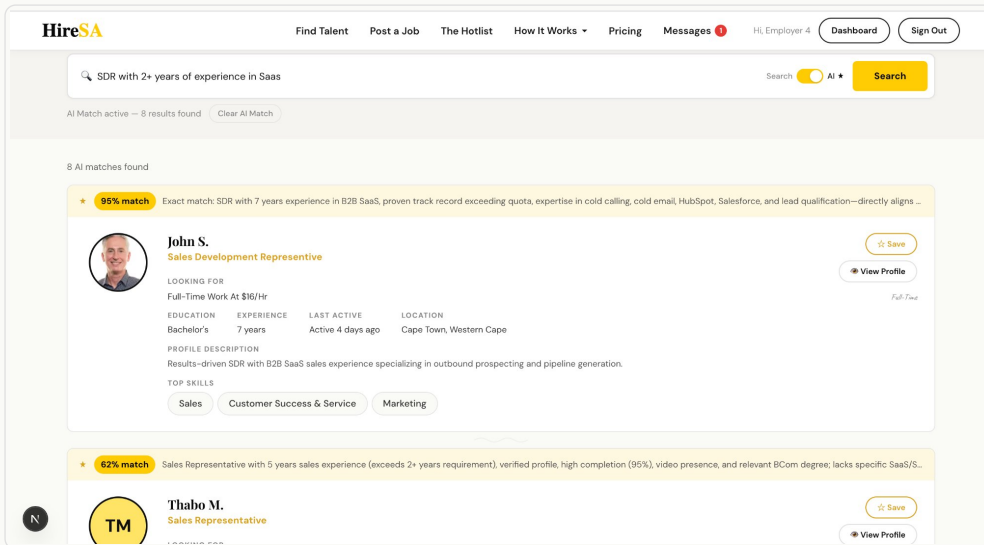
# Find and land the right roles

HireSA works in two directions. Employers search for candidates using our Find Talent tool. And candidates browse open roles on the Find Jobs board. You want to be visible in both.

## Getting found by employers

When an employer searches for "Sales Development Rep" or "Executive Assistant with Salesforce experience," HireSA's AI matching ranks candidates by fit. A complete, keyword-rich profile dramatically increases your visibility. Employers can save you, message you directly, or shortlist you for roles — but only if your profile gives them a reason to.

*Find Talent — AI Match ranks candidates by fit for the employer's search*



## **Finding and applying to jobs**

Browse the Find Jobs board and filter by your skills, experience level, and employment type. When you find a role that fits, apply directly through the platform. Your profile is attached automatically so no re-entering information every time.

When you apply, take a moment to make your application personal. A quick note to the employer about why you're interested in this specific role goes a long way. It shows you've read the job description and you're not just going through the motions.

## **Messaging employers directly**

HireSA has built-in messaging so employers can contact you and you can respond — all within the platform. Treat every message like a mini cover letter. Be professional, be honest, and be specific about what you can do for them. Response time matters too, employers notice when a candidate replies within hours versus days.

## Nail the interview

It's finally happening... an employer wants to talk. This is where preparation separates the candidates who get offers from the ones who get ghosted.

If you recorded a strong intro video, you've already made a great first impression. The interview is your chance to build on it, not start from scratch.

Test your setup. Before anything else, check your internet connection, webcam, mic, and lighting. Load shedding is real, have a backup plan. A mobile hotspot, a fully charged laptop, a backup location. Employers are understanding, but being prepared shows professionalism.

Communicate like a remote professional. This is the number one thing that's attracted employers to South Africa. Your ability to articulate in excellent English. Employers are evaluating you in a remote interview, whether they tell you or not. Speak clearly. Pause before answering, it shows you're thinking, not scrambling. Give structured responses. Don't ramble. If you don't know something, say so honestly and explain how you'd figure it out.

Know the company. Research the employer before the call. What do they do? Who's interviewing you? What's their team size? Show up with context, not blank stares.

Lead with results. When you talk about your experience, use numbers. "I managed the CEO's calendar" is fine. "I managed a CEO's calendar across three timezones, reducing scheduling conflicts by 40%" is memorable. Build 6-8 stories from your career with specific outcomes.

Address the remote question head-on. They're hiring a remote worker in South Africa. They may have concerns about timezone, infrastructure, or communication. Don't wait for them to ask. Proactively say: "I work SAST hours, which gives us 6+ hours of overlap with your team. I have fibre internet with a mobile backup, and I'm experienced with async communication tools like Slack and Loom."

Ask thoughtful questions. "What does success look like in the first 90 days?" is better than "What are the growth opportunities with your company?" Show them you're already thinking like a teammate.

### **On salary**

Know your number before the call. Research what similar remote roles pay on platforms like Glassdoor, Levels.fyi, and remote job boards. Set your salary on HireSA in USD so there's no ambiguity. When asked about salary expectations, give a range based on research, not a single number, and never undersell or oversell yourself. You're providing real value. Price accordingly.

# Your checklist

Everything in one place. Start at the top and work your way down.

## Before you apply

- Get clear on your target role and industry
- Identify your biggest selling points (communication, problem-solving, results, AI fluency)
- Research salary ranges for your target roles in USD
- Prepare a professional headshot

## Build your HireSA profile

- Complete every section: headline, bio, skills, experience, salary, education
- Upload a professional headshot
- Record a standout 60-second intro video (good camera, microphone, lighting, background)
- Get specific with your skills in your bio
- Set your availability and preferred employment type
- Mention AI tools you use in your bio

## Search and apply

- Browse the Find Jobs board and filter by your skills
- Personalise each application with a note to the employer
- Respond to employer messages within 24 hours
- Keep track of where you've applied (spreadsheet or Notion)

## Prepare for interviews

- Build 6-8 career stories with specific results and metrics
- Test your internet, webcam, mic, and lighting
- Have a load shedding backup plan (hotspot, backup location)
- Research each company and interviewer before every call
- Practise your salary negotiation talking points

And most importantly, take care of yourself. Job searching is hard, and it's okay to take breaks. You're doing the right thing by investing in your career.

I built HireSA because I believe South African professionals deserve better access to the global job market. Complete your profile, put yourself out there, and let's get you hired.

– *Mathew*

*Founder of HireSA*

[hiresa.com](https://hiresa.com)