**Career Advice #77**

**Zainab Raheem (Nigeria)**

**Self-Employed**

**Replied to Job Search Post via Brigette Hyacinth**

**31 March 2019**

Career Advice #77 originated out of Nigeria on 31 March 2019 when I came across Zainab Raheem’s reply within the comments section of a post made by LinkedIn influencer Brigette Hyacinth. Although I did not save the post made by Zainab, nor do I recall the exact comments I had made, Zainab had reached out to connect with me on LinkedIn. I left her a couple of voice messages through LinkedIn indicating:

1st Voice Message: “…incredible potential exists across Africa in the tech space as companies like Andela are training coders; in fact, I have followed many Nigeria-based coders on Twitter, as part of the free 100 days of code initiative…”

2nd Voice Message: “…Nigeria is a large country with a population > 150 million…it is difficult to stand out and get people’s attention of your skills…I recommend using LinkedIn to drill down and research the companies and people you are interested in working for…”

3rd Message: “…I told her I was not in a position to review or CV…I recommended that she creates an outreach plan that is relevant to her; I offered to provide some ideas on how to improve her job search…”

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**Initial Assistance**

Zainab thanked me for the messages and on 1 April 2019, I sent the following detailed direct message:

Hi Zainab, I have spent nearly 20 years away from my home city of Calgary, Canada. I have no specific advice for anyone to find work (whether in their home country or overseas) — other than the outline below. One thing I know for sure: No one person is going to work harder on your job search than you. This is your responsibility.

Today’s market is completely different than 1995 (the 1st time I went overseas as a single person) and in 2001 (the 2nd time with my family). We have lived in Albania, Kazakhstan, Russia, Dubai and now Qatar. Today is the best time to learn new skills that can add value to any organization. How? By searching the Internet. What do you like? What are your hobbies? What do you think you could learn that could benefit your current company or past companies you worked for?

By the way, these are two articles I posted on Job Search last July:

7 July 2018 | Job Search 2022 | [**https://bit.ly/2MW4bK9**](https://bit.ly/2MW4bK9%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

10 July 2018 | Retro Recruiting Rebuked |  [**https://bit.ly/2L21kii**](https://bit.ly/2L21kii%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

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Zainab – I have three suggestions for you:

1. 1. Gary Vaynerchuk
2. 2. Software / new tech for small business
3. 3. Job Search on Linked In

GARY VAYNERCHUK. I strongly suggest that you take time to listen to his views on entrepreneurship, branding and awareness on social media, persistence, patience, humbleness, kindness, humility, self-awareness, etc. Start with this podcast: [https://apple.co/2setheN](%22) and then consider downloading his book “Crushing It”.

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NEW TECHNOLOGY. Depending upon your clients and contacts in the small business community in your city (Lagos, Abuja), it may beneficial if you took time to learn about the latest software that can help companies:

**Quinyx** a cloud-based software solutions help the likes of McDonald’s, London City Airport, Swarovski and Burger King manage employee scheduling, communication, task-management and payroll integration | [https://www.quinyx.com](%22)

**BenchPrep** | a learning platform for education and training organizations “Train the Trainer” | [https://benchprep.com](%22)

Karma | Sweden - unsold food sales (<http://karma.life>)

**ViSenze** | Singapore-startup that provides visual search tools for online retailers | https://www.visenze.com

StellaService | a software company that sells customer service performance data, ratings, and analytics to online retailers | https://stellaconnect.io/

**Pensa Systems** | a startup that gives retailers and manufacturers an automated view of what’s on retail shelves using autonomous vision capture https://www.pensasystems.com/

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JOBSEARCH. My suggestions for finding a ANY role in your city are as follows:

1st. This is very important. You MUST send “personalized invitations” to all of the individuals that you seek to reach out to on LinkedOn. Specifically, you need to directly contact the HR managers of all of the companies that you feel your skills are needed. Using the LinkedIn search function, type in “Hotel” or “Restaurant” or “Construction” or “Shipping” and set the location to “Lagos” and see what comes up. Record all of these names. Repeat this exercise for each of the different sectors or industries that you want to work in plus use GOOGLE to find as many as you can for each location.

2nd. Make a detailed list in excel of each of the different sectors, company names and for each country (if other than Nigeria).

3rd. Now for each company, use the LinkedIn search function to search for the HR managers, HR recruiters within that company. Make sure you have a minimum of 2 per company and up to a maximum of 5 for the larger companies. Trust me, many of the large companies have large HR departments of 15 to 20 personnel.

4th. Create your own 300 character “personalized introduction” that you will use for each of the people you have collected their names. All you need to do is change the name and company. Here is an example of what I used for myself

Sandeep. While CFO of Qatar Solar I took a deep dive into emerging technologies. Current adviser to 3 tech startups and MECA CFO Academy. Add 2 decades energy sector & 9 yrs MENA w/ 33mths construction. Keen to chat CFO roles with Weatherford: Best in class finance w/ new school approach.

5th. It is very important that you put in a personal note when you click the “connect” button. I suggest that at a minimum you reach out to at least 100 people. This will be hard at first and you may feel a little uncomfortable. Forget about it. It is more uncomfortable not working and besides, you have nothing to lose.

6th. Once they accept your connect request, immediately reply and thank them for accepting your connection request. Now, instead of immediately sending your CV, you will give them a little comment on their company and why you think there is common ground for you to work for them. You will then say “...and with your permission, I would pleased to send you my CV”. This is important so that they are forced to respond (or not) but it keeps the control in your hands.

7th. While you are waiting for these people to get back to you, you seek to pivot and learn some new skills while you are looking for work. You can also learn about different types of tech available for HR, education, car sharing, hotel management, food delivery, Internet of Things (IoT), Cybersecurity, etc Get used to using Google!!

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If you are willing to spend time and hustle learning something new, I am ready to listen and give you feedback.

Cheers, Allen

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**Scholars for Rhodes**

There is not much I would amend from the submission I made back to Zainab back in March/April 2019. However, I would expand on my guidance to Zainab by drawing attention to the following:

*  Recent innovation in Nigeria and nearby African nations;
*  The growing venture capital community in Africa
*  Angel List in Africa

The following message was sent to Zainab earlier today:

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Good day Zainab,

Further to our brief exchange back in March and April of 2019, I would like to provide some additional information for you to consider:

*  Recent innovation in Nigeria and nearby African nations;
*  The growing venture capital community in Africa
*  Angel List in Africa
*  LinkedIn Outreach (amended)

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**African Innovation**

In early 2018, I started following the “100daysofcode” group on Twitter. The members of the group – the ones that code – are asked to tweet the results of their daily coding efforts in exchange for accessing the “free” coding instructions on the website ([https://www.100daysofcode.com/](%22)). Personally, I do not code but I thought that by following the progress of such participants, this would be a good way of getting a pulse on coders across the globe. One thing I noticed early on was the significant number of members partaking in the “100daysofcode” challenge resided on the African continent – many were from Nigeria and Kenya; some from Tanzania, Senegal and Egypt.

Therefore, with the thought that I may come across African technology companies in connection with my venture capital research, I started compiling a list of innovative Africa-based companies that I could then pass on to the coders as and when appropriate. Since early 2018, I have been following the funding announcements from several technology-focused media newsletters and on-line posts such as: StrictlyVC newsletter (as published by Techcrunch editor, Connie Loizos), Crunchbase News, Techcrunch, VentureBeat, UKTN and FinSME’s Inc.

This is a list I had compiled from mid-2018 and throughout the early part of 2019:

Nigeria-focused

Opay | mobile payments startup that was founded by the Norwegian browser company Opera | <https://operapay.com/>

FairMoney | FinTech startup building a challenger bank in Nigeria | <https://www.fairmoney.ai/>

Kudi | digital payments and collection | https://kudi.co

Boomplay, a nearly four-year-old, Nigeria-based music streaming service founded by Transsnet | <https://www.boomplaymusic.com/>

Paystack, payments company (Stripe & Visa investing) | https://paystack.com

Paga, mobile payments | www.mypaga.com

TeamApt | digital banking |https://teamapt.com

TradeDepot (e-commerce) | Partech funded | https://www.tradedepot.co

Kenya-focus

Branch, a Nairobi, Kenya-based fintech startup that assesses creditworthiness using smartphone data | <https://branch.co> |

MPesa | mobile payments | http://bit.ly/2kPiVlJ

Pezesha, a lending marketplace | <https://pezesha.com>

WeFarm | farmer to farmer digital network | https://wefarm.co

Africa-focus

Chipper Cash | SF-based no-fee cross-border startup focused on Africa | <https://chippercash.com/>

Jumia Technologies | e-commerce platform with recent IPO (Crunchbase article: [https://bit.ly/2D1eUR3](%22)) | https://group.jumia.com

Andela | developing coders and software engineers in Kenya, Nigeria and other countries | https://andela.com

Bboxx | London-based energy firm that's lighting up homes in Africa with pay-as-you-go solar power | http://www.bboxx.co.uk/

Nomanini | Cape Town-based fintech platform for the informal retail ecosystem | <https://nomanini.com>

NOTE: This is not meant to be a complete list of all technology companies in Africa or in the countries noted. A Google or related search may reveal additional companies in the market.

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**Recent Africa-based funding announcements**

When I searched for recent Nigerian and African funding announcements over the period 1 September 2019 to 21 January 2020, I found the following disclosures:

Flutterwave, a 3.5-year-old, San Francisco- and Lagos, Nigeria-based payments tech company, has raised $35 million in Series B funding co-led by Greycroft and eVentures, with participation from CRE Ventures, FIS, Visa, and Green Visor. TechCrunch article: <https://tcrn.ch/2RIvPhQ> | https://flutterwave.com/us/

Rensource Energy, a four-year-old, Lagos, Nigeria-based provider of solar-powered, off-grid energy for small and medium size enterprises, has raised $20 million in Series A funding co-led by CRE VC and Omidyar Network. | http://www.rensource.energy/

uLesson, an 11-month-old, Nigeria-based e-learning platform that connects tutors with secondary school students in Nigeria and broader Africa, has raised $3.1 million in seed funding led by TLcom Capital. TechCrunch article: <https://tcrn.ch/2NUNhP7> | http://www.ulesson.com/

OPay, a Nigeria's leading mobile wallet and motorbike ridesharing provider, raised $120m in Series B funding | FinSME article: <https://bit.ly/2NXmstA> | https://operapay.com/

Lori Systems, a 3,5-year-old, Nairobi, Kenya-based on-demand trucking logistics company, has an undisclosed amount of Series A funding led by Chinese investors Hillhouse Capital and Crystal Stream Capital. Other participating investors included Nigeria and U.S.-based EchoVC, Flexport CEO Ryan Petersen and Nigerian founder Iyinoluwa Aboyeji. TechCrunch article: <https://tcrn.ch/2RXoTxx> | https://www.lorisystems.com/

Kuda, a 1.5-year-old, Lagos, Nigeria-based digital-only retail bank with a presence in London, has raised $1.6 million in pre-seed funding from numerous angel investors. TechCrunch article: <https://tcrn.ch/2GkttQK> | https://kudabank.com/

NOTE 1: As above, this is not meant to be a complete list of all African funding announcements over this period. A Google or related search will likely arrive at further companies on the market.

NOTE 2: You may want to consider subscribing to similar newsletters that announce local funding of startups and other entities in your area. A common disclosure made by many companies that receive new funding includes such wording:

“…part of the proceeds will be used to hire staff to scale-up our operations…”

Imagine if you reached out to one or more of these companies to see if there is common ground to work together? What if you simply connected to expand your network to set the stage for potential collaboration in the future?

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**African-based venture capital | An introduction**

The funding announcements of African-tech firms also make reference to Venture Capital (VC), Private Equity (PE) and other investors that participate in the funding round. Reviewing the detailed news publication often provides links to the individual company websites – both for the target tech company and the investors.

Further information on such companies can also be found in the Crunchbase website ([https://www.crunchbase.com/home](%22)). In fact, the “Free” section of Crunchbase is generally sufficient to allow a job seeker to find out the names of key management of the tech company, several of their key investors, links to the websites of the tech company and other supporting information such as a list of competitors and similar companies. The “Paid” or “Pro” version of Crunchbase is really meant for professionals that seek more in-depth background information to support their work (such as for an investment analyst or stock broker). Of course, Google is a wonderful supplement to find further information on all of the above in the event that one or more of the above sources is lacking.

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***Support over the VC/PE Portfolio***

Most VC/PE companies list portfolio (investee) companies on their websites. Such companies will range from startups to full commercial entities. In my view, there are a couple of potential opportunities hidden within the African venture capital community for experienced personnel.

Based upon your LinkedIn profile, your nearly 3 years of self-employed experience (CEO of TradLoft), combined with your earlier 3+ years of experience, could be of benefit to either the VC/PE firms or their portfolio companies:

* • Strategic advisor to the VC/PE partners and investment associates on assessing the quality of key management personnel, administrative policies & procedures and/or operational readiness within existing portfolio companies or planned target acquisitions;
* • Strategic advice and support to one or more of the individual companies within a VC / PE portfolio including advising on its strategic plan for expanding / scaling the business across Africa or abroad;

NOTE: There may be other roles or opportunities within such VC/PE entities and/or their portfolio companies that may or may not be publicly announced. As VC’s/PE’s expand, the need increases for them to hire various support functions to “work across the portfolio” — such as HR, marketing, accounting, IT, legal. This is a growing trend that Stephanie Manning Cohen from Lerer Hippeau, a New York-based venture capital firm, describes in this Forbes article: <http://bit.ly/2vNF9X6>.

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**African Venture Capital | Examples**

The following is a selection of VC’s / PE’s based in selected African countries that I compiled from the funding announcements, research on Crunchbase and/or Google search: Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Egypt and others. This is not meant to be a complete list. Google or other search functions may reveal additional VC / PE firms across the African continent:

**Nigeria-based VCs**

Adlevo Capital | http://www.adlevocapital.com/

Africa Finance Corporation | http://www.africafc.org/

Aruwa Capital Management | http://www.aruwacapital.com/

Consonance Investment Managers | https://www.consonanceinvest.com/

EchoVC Partners | http://www.echovc.com/

Kuramo Capital Management | http://www.kuramocapital.com/

Lotus Capital Limited | http://www.lotuscapitallimited.com/

Platform Capital Investment Partners | http://theplatformcapital.com/

Quantum Capital Partners | https://quantumcapital.com.ng/

**Kenyan-based VCs**

AfricInvest Group | http://www.africinvest.com/

AHL Venture Partners | http://www.ahlventurepartners.com/

Bamboo Capital Partners | http://www.bamboocp.com/

Emerging Capital Partners | http://www.ecpinvestments.com/

Enza Capital | https://enza.capital/

Fanisi Capital | http://www.fanisi.com/

InVhestia Africa Ltd | http://www.invhestia.com/

Northwood Africa Partners | http://www.northwoodafricapartners.com/

**Ghana-based**

Adenia Partners | https://www.adenia.com/

Chanzo Capital | http://www.chanzocapital.com/

Ingressive Capital | http://ingressivecapital.com/

Injaro Investments | https://www.injaroinvestments.com/

Oasis Capital Ghana | http://www.oasiscapitalghana.com/

Quick Angels Ghana | http://quickangelsghana.com/

Sarpong Capital | http://www.sarpongcapital.com/

**South Africa-based VCs**

ABAN | https://abanangels.org

African Development Bank | https://www.afdb.org/en

African Infrastructure Investment Managers | https://aiimafrica.com/

Agile Capital | http://www.agilecapital.co.za/

Aligned Capital (Pty) Ltd | https://www.alignedcapital.co.za/

AltCap Venture Capital | http://www.altcap.co.za

Convergence Partners | https://www.convergencepartners.com/

CRE Venture Capital | https://www.cre.vc/

Edge Growth Ventures | http://www.edgegrowth.com/

Eighteen East Capital | http://www.18eastcapital.com/

Ethos Private Equity | http://www.ethos.co.za

Grovest Venture Capital | https://vc4a.com/grovest/

HAVAÍC | https://www.havaic.com/

Invested Asset Management | https://www.investecassetmanagement.com/en/

ishack ventures | https://www.ishackventures.com

JM Capital Africa | http://jmca.capital

Jozi Angels | https://www.joziangels.co.za

Kalon Venture Partners |https://www.kalonvp.com/

Knife Capital | http://www.knifecap.com/

Mamor Capital | http://mamorcapital.com

Moshe Capital Pty Ltd | https://www.moshecapital.com

Naspers Limited | https://www.naspers.com

RMB Corvest |https://www.rmbcorvest.co.za/

SABAN | http://saban.org.za/

Venture Network | https://www.venturenetwork.co.za

**EGYPT-based**

Afreximbank | http://www.afreximbank.com/

Algebra Ventures | https://algebraventures.com

Cairo Angels | http://cairoangels.com/

Egypt Ventures | http://www.egyptventures.com/

Ezdehar Management | http://ezdehar.com/

Falak Startups | http://www.falakstartups.com/

Flat6Labs | https://www.flat6labs.com/companies/

**Other**

Amani Partners | [http://www.amani-partners.com/](%22) | Uganda

Amaya Capital | [https://www.amayacap.com/](%22) | Mauritius

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**VC / PE action plan**

1. 1. VC’s & PE’s. You may want to consider learning the names of managing partners, investment associates & research analysts at one or more the VC/PE firms outlined above. In my view, this is a good way to learn more about the VC / PE firm’s investment strategy and their focus. Following the VC/PE on LinkedIn & Twitter and subscribing to their VC/PE newsletter may also alert you to the VC/PE firms planned investments or additional funding to be provided to their existing investee companies.
2. 2. VC/PE portfolio companies. As with the startups that post open roles on Angel List (see below), many of the portfolio companies will seek to hire personnel as they grow and scale. VC/PE firms typically have “Portfolio” links on their websites. I further recommend that you consider making lists of companies that you want to know more about and will potentially reach out to them in the future.

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**Angel List in Africa**

**Angel List | https://angel.co**

This site is primarily used by tech startups to list tech & non-tech roles here. Quick search revealed:

30,300+ startups globally list open roles on the site

259 with open roles listed across Africa

81 in South Africa

69 in Nigeria

51 in Kenya

22 in Egypt

14 in Ghana

9 in Uganda

6 in Tanzania

NOTE 1: The low numbers represent significant potential as more and more tech startups get familiar with the Angel List site, especially given the innovation in African tech startups and the growing number of venture capital entities across the continent.

NOTE 2: I recommend that job seekers consider spending time on the site. Set up their profile. Set search agents. Startups may not always use traditional recruiting sites. When they scale, they tend to need experienced staff.

As to the “Nigeria-based” startups listed on Angel List, this is a sample selection:

Pangolo | on-line marketplace for fashion | [https://www.pangolo.com/](%22)

Mkobo | fintech startup | http://www.mkobo.com.ng/

Semper Lux | custom clothing | https://fitted.ng

Mayo | magazine on mental health | [http://www.mayomagazine.com/](%22)

Gridless Africa | African clean energy think tank | https://gridlessafrica.com/

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**LinkedIn Outreach**

My message on 1 April 2019 touched on this issue (ie. 6 steps to using LinkedIn to conduct your outreach). This is a summary version for when you are ready to reach out to various companies (including the CEO’s and HR managers of the African tech companies, the VC/PE investment managers, the VC/PE portfolio companies and/or the startups listed on Angel List.

Step 1: Prepare 300-character introduction

Use LinkedIn “Personalized Message” to connect. Not everyone will reply and accept your request when you simply click on “Connect” with the template reply “Zainab wants to connect with you”.

An example of an introduction for the Country Manager of Opay Nigeria (Iniabasi Akpan) could be as simple as:

Hi Iniabasi, I am reaching out to startups in Nigeria to expand my network. I have 6+ years of relevant experience… [EXPAND/AMEND, as needed]. I would be keen to connect to learn about your business & see if there is common ground to work together now or in the future. Zainab

When they accept your connection, thank them & request permission to send your CV; confirm appropriate email address.

Step 2: Use email to send your resume & relevant cover letter

NOTE: You should consider using this approach to reach out to 77, 177 or 377 individuals from the sources outlined above (in Nigeria and across Africa).

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Feel free to message me to bounce across ideas. Have fun researching!

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**#Nigeriacareers #Africancareers #Africanrecruiting #Africanjobsearch #careeradvice #recruiting #jobsearch #jobsearchadvice #jobsearchtips #selflearning #HR #jobseekers #career #recruitment #cv #resume #headhunter #humanresources #venturecapital #technology #fintech #banking #yyccareers #yycjobsearch #yycinnovation #yycrecruiting #yycadulteducation #yycjobsearch #yyccareers #yyccareeradvice #calgaryeconomicdevelopment #startupcalgary #garyveechallenge**