# Engineering Accelerator Q&A - Jobseekrs

**To mark the conclusion of our first Engineering Accelerator, we spoke to Jamaal and Elsa from Jobseekrs, one of the four start-ups participating in the programme.**

## What are your roles at Jobseekrs?

**Jamaal**: Founder & CEO

**Elsa**: Director & Head of Student Engagement

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## What motivates you?

**Jamaal**: I believe it is in part naïve to think we can fully cure world poverty but rather believe together, we can create a more sustainable approach. In my opinion, this would be achieved by ensuring everyone has access to any job opportunity to earn a living to support both themselves and family. This approach should go beyond geographical location, race, age, academic qualifications, and of course familial and cultural background. I was born in Barbados in a socio-economically deprived region. I had big ambitions, ideas and outstanding talents. Following my passion for aviation, I set out to become a pilot. After achieving this, I went on to search for opportunities to develop my numerous other talents. I was faced with several challenges and obstacles due to my lack of qualification in a respective field albeit my willingness to learn and execute at whatever level was demanded.  I always wanted to be judged on who I am as an individual, whilst taking into consideration my skills, talents and potential. After realising other job candidates echoed the same feeling, this led me to the creation of Jobseekrs – the world's first video interactive job-site that uses psychometric culture-fit and takes unconscious bias out of matching great candidates to suitable roles.

**Elsa**: Simply put, Jobseekrs is a platform I wish I had as a student over 10 years ago. As a young person, the process of linking your interests and skills to career

paths can be daunting and at other times, confusing. I believe we will have 3 – 4 careers in a life time and the system should be accommodating of this. I believe academic institutions should prepare young people for a diverse range of careers at a basic level. I believe employers should take into consideration candidate's hard skills, soft skills and personality traits. I believe it takes a lot more to stay in a job than just qualifications and years of experience; I believe it takes a person who feels comfortable and fits into that company's culture. My hope is for Jobseekrs to become the guiding hand for young people from school, through to college, training or further education and employment.

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## What's your favourite thing about your job?

**Jamaal**: The feeling and knowledge that I am creating something that could change and impact lives profoundly, globally!

**Elsa**: Direct engagement with academic institutions – schools, colleges and universities. The individuals within these institutions are passionate and keen to make a difference in young people's lives. This is achieved by building their aspirations and raising awareness on the multitude of opportunities available to them.

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## What are your hobbies?

**Jamaal**: Plane-spotting, travelling, gliding, watching "Air Crash Investigation" and learning about the reasons behind plane crashes and normally racing to solve the mystery before the end of each episode. I also love spending quality time with my family and friends and to be honest, learning and reading more about business.

**Elsa**: Salsa dancing, travelling and visiting new places and going to church.

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## What's the most bizarre thing you've ever done?

**Jamaal**: I am not sure about bizarre but the most exhilarating thing I have done is fly in a “RAF Tornado GR4 Combat Jet”.

**Elsa**: I went white shark cage diving in Cape Town, South Africa in 2015. Ha!

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## What are you looking forward to in the next 12 months?

**Jamaal**: The growth of Jobseekrs and gaining 1 million users. Ambitious but I am up for the challenge. Bring it on!

**Elsa**: The growth of Jobseekrs.

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## What's your proudest accomplishment?

**Jamaal**: Building and growing Jobseekrs to what it is now in the face of personal grief and a wide range of difficulties. Jobseekrs has soft launched its MVP and is engaging with over 15 companies in the Greater Manchester area, 6 Universities.

**Elsa**: Successfully completing my PhD in Infectious Diseases and Global Health whilst exploring my other interests and developing my talents. These include; starting a company called – the Northwest Biotech Initiative CIC, to encourage collaboration between academia and industry and enable students to gain employment upon graduation. In addition, I spent 6 weeks in Guinea during the biggest Ebola outbreak in West Africa and subsequently was awarded “the Ebola medal for service to West Africa” by Her Majesty The Queen. Following that, I was selected as one of the European Commission’s Young Leaders 2016 as a voice of youth to speak with high decision makers on high level panels and influence policy through some of the sustainable development goals (SDG) at the European Development Days 2016.

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## If you were an animal what would you be?

**Jamaal**: I may not be the biggest animal in the jungle – an elephant, but the king of the jungle remains the Lion! I am a Lion!

**Elsa**: I don't have an animal, but I believe if I was a city, I would be the city of Cape Town – the blend of the ocean, beach, sunsets and also the mountains. The culture, the people, the soul of a city that in my opinion can be summarised as – beauty and resilience!

> The Engineering Accelerator is a collaboration between GCHQ, Wayra UK, Cisco and Manchester Science Partnerships to help start-ups in Manchester rapidly develop their products and services.
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> We provide business and technical mentoring to selected start-up companies to help them to grow. In return, our software engineers benefit from the unique opportunity of working with emerging tech companies trying to solve problems that have parallels with our own challenges.
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> In 2019 we mentored four emerging start-up companies on our three month programme. These were PlaceDashboard, Jobseekrs, Locometric and Y?Not.

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