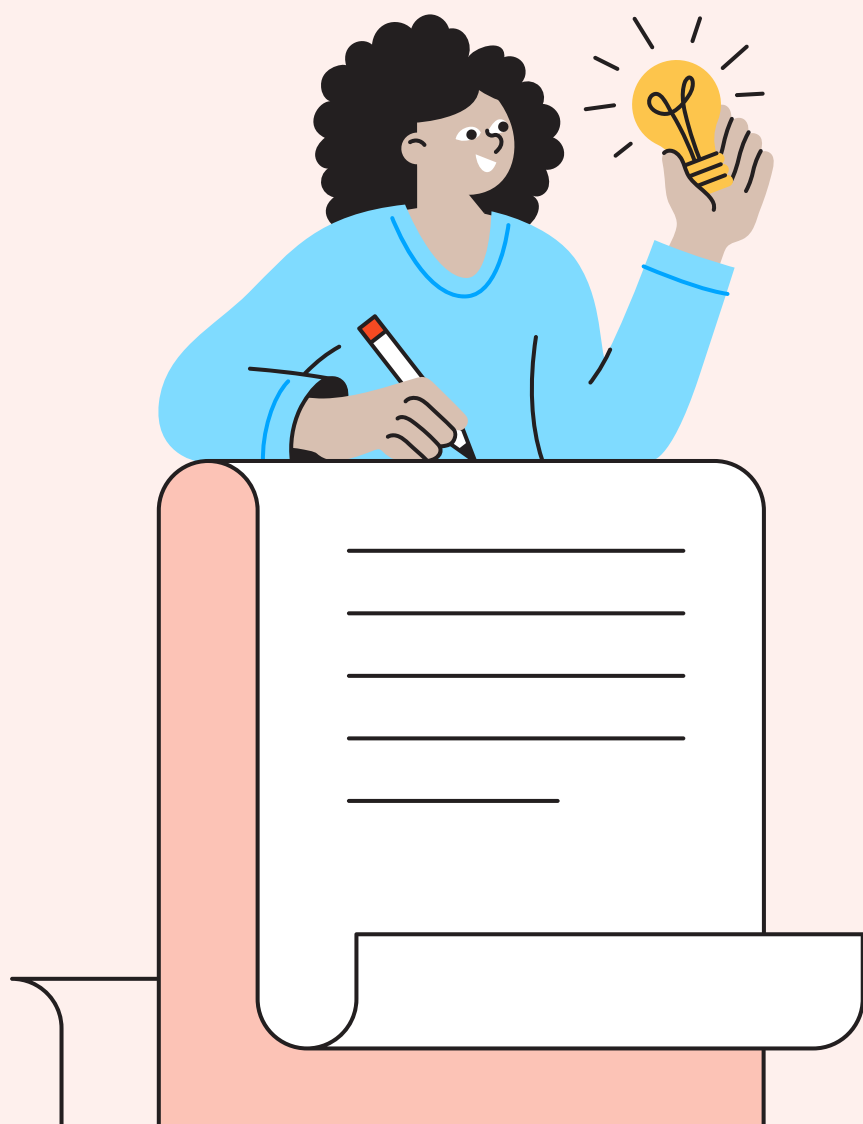


How to find and keep great employees.



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**When the labour market's tight,
as it is right now, finding the right
new people is hard work.**

Hanging onto the good people you
already have is also a mission.

That's why developing best-practice
strategies for attraction and retention
is the best way forward.

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1. Today's employment landscape

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned the employment landscape on its head.

Workers have had long lockdowns to think about their careers and work satisfaction, resulting in the 'great resignation'. A lack of international travellers on working holidays has caused major labour shortages. Young kiwis have been leaving the country in droves, embarking on overseas experience and a break from New Zealand. And fewer skilled workers have been arriving from overseas, because they simply can't get in.

Some industries have been hit harder than others, but overall New Zealand is experiencing the most candidate-short employment market in decades.

If you're going to successfully recruit and keep good people in this environment, it's time to hustle. In a competitive job market, the employers who work the hardest to attract and retain people have the advantage.

This guide has been designed to help you devise effective protocols for recruitment and retention. Because we're in a post-pandemic world, these ideas go further than before to make employees feel welcome, valued and rewarded.



2. The benefits of careful, quality-driven recruiting

The days of quickly throwing an ad together and getting it up on Seek are over. Recruitment strategies are deeper and wider now, because candidates have the luxury of choice. To attract and keep the right people, you need a multi-faceted approach that thinks of everything.

Here's why New Zealand's top employers put a lot of time and thought into recruitment:



It's easier to attract the right sort of candidates if you start with a clear picture of what the organisation/business needs. These needs become a checklist for assessing candidates.



Using logic rather than instincts or 'feelings' helps to accurately identify a shortlist of candidates.



While skill-set is important for candidates, having a compatible personality is also important. Personality testing is becoming more common. Employees that don't stick or don't fit create stress, reduce productivity and damage company culture. Replacing them is expensive.



Having a recruitment strategy and tweaking it to ensure continuous improvement makes it easier to find the right person every time you go looking.



Being open-minded about diversity ensures you'll have more candidates to choose from. This means hiring without discrimination or bias, adhering to privacy and human rights regulations, and ensuring your new employee is entitled to work in NZ.



Ensuring your new hires have a smooth recruitment and induction experience helps to reduce the possibility of them getting cold feet in the first few weeks.

3. Developing a successful strategy for recruiting

A clear-cut hiring plan is worth its weight in gold. It starts with role definitions and it ends with a streamlined process for on-boarding. Here's what goes into a robust recruitment strategy:

Make a plan

To begin at the beginning, check that you have an up-to-date organisational chart. It should define departments, key functions, roles and responsibilities. There are free templates online for building an organisational chart or you can use a SmartArt hierarchy diagram in Microsoft Word or PowerPoint.

If your organisational chart hasn't been reviewed for a while, book a workshop session with your managers and make any necessary updates

Build your employer brand

Your employer brand is your company's reputation in the job market. It lives in the hearts and minds of your past, current and future employees. If your employer brand is healthy, your organisation/company will have a reputation for being a great place to work. If it's a bit dodgy, it's likely you'll never even see the best candidates, because they won't apply for the jobs you advertise.

Here are the elements of an employer brand:

Brand evangelists.

Existing employees who feel good about their employer (you). They talk to work colleagues, friends and family about how much they enjoy their job and why they think you are a good employer.

Careers page on your website.

Apart from being a place to advertise current vacancies, your careers or 'work for us' page is a chance to sell your company as an employer.

Job ad design.

Like a welcome mat, your job ads need to look inviting and attractive. They should have a consistent look that uses your company's visual brand assets (logo, colours) accurately. You can even extend design to how you write your ads. The headlines and body copy can have a distinctive and engaging style that makes your ads different.

Brand story.

If you sell products and services, you will probably have a brand story for your potential customers. Likewise you need a brand story for potential recruits. It can live on your careers page, in welcome packs and on your intranet. A good brand story will reference values and vision, diversity, wellbeing, job satisfaction, training, rewards and other elements of a positive employment experience.

Social media presence.

Having Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn pages for interesting and fun work stories presents a happy, successful face to the world. It also shows your employees that you're proud of them. And, of course, the audiences could include candidates who are thinking of applying for a job.

Wearable branding.

When your employees participate in a sporting, charity or industry event with links to your brand, they should be wearing your colours. If they wear a branded uniform, make sure it's attractive and comfortable.

Driveable branding.

Branded vehicles are moving billboards for both your brands - consumer and employer. Vinyl wraps can do amazing things for vehicle branding, especially if you want to look like a cool, fun or superior place to work.

Create a development pathway

Nobody wants a dead-end job, so right from the get-go you should be able to offer employees opportunities to expand and add to their skills.

A development pathway can include mentors within your workplace, job shadowing, rotating teams to broaden experience, bringing in specialists for training, in-house workshops and seminars, formal off-site training and online training.

When candidates see that you offer a development pathway, they'll be more likely to accept a job offer and more likely to stay.



Develop an effective interview process

Interviewing is an important part of the recruitment process – too important to leave to chance. If numerous people within your company or organisation will be interviewing candidates, it can be helpful to develop interview protocols that work for everyone.

Here are some elements that could be part of your interview process:

- Job description and role requirements
- Pre-employment assessments and checks
 - Personality
 - Cognitive ability
 - Language ability
 - Role-specific skills
 - Qualifications
 - LinkedIn profile
- Video or phone chat
- One-on-one interview with pre-planned questions
- Tour of the premises
- Meeting a couple of your existing employees
- Reference checking

Offer flexibility

The pandemic has taught us all that work doesn't have to happen at the office. And it doesn't have to be full-time. How much flexibility you can offer a candidate depends on the role, but it could include:

- Casual or part-time work
- A compressed work week
- Job sharing
- Working from home some of the time
- In-the-office hours that fit around family needs
- Working while they're travelling
- Provision for dogs to come to work



Never stop looking

Even when you have no vacancies, keep the door open for people to submit their CV online. You'll build a database of potential candidates for the next vacancy and you might stumble upon somebody you simply can't let slip through your fingers. If you don't nab amazing talent when it's available, your competitors will.



4. Questions for an in-person interview

These days a lot of ground will already be covered before a candidate is sitting in front of you. Possibly you will have had a phone or video chat, asked the candidate to take a personality and cognitive test, checked references and confirmed qualifications.

The job:

- ☐ Why does this position interest you?
- ☐ What do you know about us (the company)?
- ☐ What do you like about our products/services?

The past:

- ☐ What do you like and dislike about your current job?
- ☐ What's your greatest work achievement so far?
- ☐ Who was your best-ever boss and why?

The future:

- ☐ What would you like to be doing in five years' time?
- ☐ What do you think would get you there?

People skills:

- ☐ What do you do when somebody gets angry with you?
- ☐ How do you try to win somebody over to your point of view?

Personality:

- ☐ What do your best friends like about you?
- ☐ What three (positive) words would you use to describe yourself?

Housekeeping:

- ☐ What base salary/hourly rate are you looking for?
- ☐ Do you have any holidays booked?
- ☐ When could you start work?
- ☐ Do you have any medical problems or disabilities that could affect your ability to do the job?

5. Making new people feel welcome

Assuming you've secured the candidate you wanted, how do you ensure they enjoy a pleasant and streamlined transition to their new position? First impressions can last forever, so it's more-than-important to make them happy from the moment you press the 'go' button.

When they accept the job

When the salary negotiations are over and the employment contract is signed, it's easy to drop the ball and get on with other stuff. However, what you do next could really seal the deal. Never stop wooing your new hire; their experience in the first few days, weeks and months with your company will decide whether they stay or turnover.

A 2017 study by research and analyst firm Brandon Hall Group found that organisations with a positive on-boarding process improve new hire retention by more than 80%.¹

These findings are backed up by a 2013 study that found new employees who don't get enough support and direction in the first 90 days can feel isolated and become withdrawn.²



1. <https://b2b-assets.glassdoor.com/the-true-cost-of-a-bad-hire.pdf>

2. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264782308_Support_Undermining_and_Newcomer_Socialization_Fitting_in_During_the_First_90_Days

Here are some suggestions that will help to settle in a new hire:

Make them feel wanted and appreciated

- Even if you've already confirmed employment by email, give your new hire a call to say how happy you are to have them on board.
- You can go a step further and send a gift to their home – something edible is always good. Or maybe some free samples of the products you make, if you're in manufacturing. This might seem a little extreme, but these are extreme times!
- A couple of days before their start date, email a 'welcome to your first day' message that includes things like where and when to arrive, transport tips, what to bring, dress code, who will meet them, who to call if they have any questions and so on.

Help them get to know their new workplace

- Send your new hire links to information about your company's mission, values, history, culture, community engagement, leadership team bios etc.
- Consider including an e-card from their immediate team with a fun group photo, names and even a short light-hearted bio from each person.

For their first day

Prepare and plan ahead, but be careful to not overload the new employee's time. Asking them to arrive an hour or two after everyone else can help them feel less hurried on day one. It also gives their manager time to deal with the busy first hour of the day and retain quality time for the new arrival.

Make them feel welcome

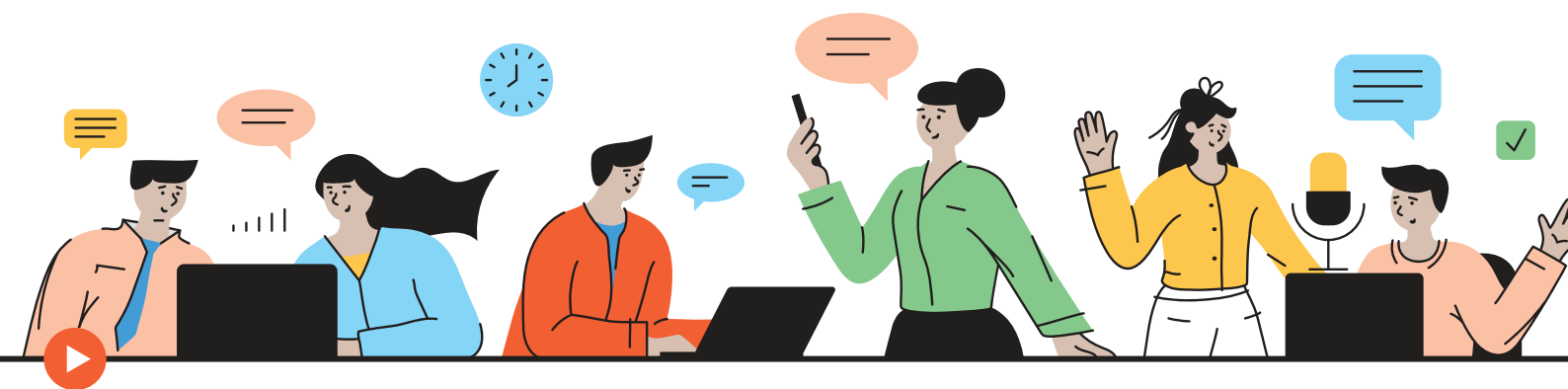
- Send signed employment agreement, as well as KiwiSaver and tax forms
- Order specific requirements for the new employee – uniform, phone, laptop/desktop, business cards etc
- Ensure everything is ready for the first day, from access card and IT login to workstation and furniture
- Prepare a schedule for their first week with introductions, training, meetings, tours and any fun events that might be happening
- Provide a little welcome gift on the first day – flowers, food, water bottle or a reusable coffee cup
- Have someone waiting to meet them when they arrive

Build connections

- Set up a mentor or buddy, perhaps changing occasionally so they can get to know other colleagues
- Introduce your new hire to the intranet or company communication platform
- Pre-arrange face-to-face meetings with the main people the new hire will interact with in their role, including people in other departments or locations (via video call if necessary)
- Organise a break-the-ice morning tea or lunch

Set goals

- Meet with your new hire to share the company's high-level objectives (more about that below)
- Share the specific results that the new hire's department/team are aiming to deliver
- Set goals for the new hire, including a time frame for delivery (one month, two months, six months etc)
- Identify any training or support the new hire might need to achieve their goals



6. Keeping employees loyal

When an employee resigns and leaves, estimates suggest it can cost you up to double their annual remuneration to replace them.

Nearly 40% of skilled professionals surveyed for the Hays Australian and New Zealand Salary Guide FY21/22 said they were looking or planning to look for a new job. So making a conscious effort to hold onto the good people you have before they get itchy feet is time and money well-spent.

You don't want to be the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, coming up with an attractive counter-offer at the last minute. It's smarter to catch employees before they hurl themselves off the cliff and into a round of interviews with a competitor employer.

Here are some proven strategies to help you develop an effective employee retention plan.



Hire the right people in the first place.

Recruitment and retention go together like fish and chips. So if you developed a rock-solid recruitment strategy and you're applying it, you're off to a flying start. Your recruitment strategy will be bringing in people with the skills, backgrounds and personality traits you need. It will also be helping you to hire those who are likely to be loyal, because they're motivated by career development rather than money and power.



Share the grand vision with all employees.

When you let employees in on where the company is going, and how it plans to get there, they feel a deeper sense of purpose and belonging. If employees are not aware of your high-level objectives, their work has less meaning and they can feel like a minion, rather than a valued contributor.



Connect every role to the grand vision.

The next step is to let employees know how their specific role assists the achievement of the company's high-level objectives. This will help them to identify results they can achieve to make a positive difference to the company's future.

Here's a rollout plan that merges the above two points:

- Senior leaders identify and communicate the high-level company-wide goals.
- Each department identifies key results they can achieve to support progress towards the goals. These key results should be measurable and have a deadline.
- Each individual in the department identifies the results they can achieve that will contribute directly to the team's ability to support the company's goal achievement.

At the end of this process, everybody understands the grand vision and how they can help to bring it to life. Delivering their results allows them to experience purpose and satisfaction that makes them want to stay.



Encourage a culture of recognition and reward.

It's human nature to respond positively to praise and recognition. We all feel more confident and valued when our contributions and effort are recognised and rewarded. Some managers are great at giving praise where it's due; others need to practice to get it right.

How to give positive feedback, verbally or in writing (email or message):

- Be specific about what the employee did well.
- Explain the outcome of their actions and why that's a good thing.
- Highlight their strengths – they might not be aware of what they're good at.
- Avoid adding a 'but'. If you want to provide constructive criticism, do it at another time.
- For a really momentous achievement, you can deliver the praise at a team meeting or morning tea.

It's also important to encourage team members to cheer each other on. Recognition from colleagues is another way to boost employee satisfaction and retention. You can even use recognition software that lets your people deliver compliments to each other; these can attract points and add up to a reward.



Keep your people growing

Everybody needs to feel like they're getting somewhere, so offering learning and development opportunities should be part of your retention strategy. It's also great for business, because it increases your knowledge and skill base. Ongoing training is particularly important for younger employees who are at the start of their career journey.

Ways to make learning happen within your workplace:

- Talk to each employee about where they want their career to go. Try to identify specific skill and knowledge sets they need to get there.

- Let employees switch teams or locations for a while, to pick up new skills.
- Encourage job shadowing when workloads allow, so that younger team members can see how more experienced employees work.
- Set up a mentor programme within your workplace, with senior people helping those who have less experience.
- Run workshops during work time, where a senior staffer can help junior employees learn specific new skills.

External training and development opportunities to explore:

- Extra-mural university courses.
- Trade training through an accredited provider.
- Certificates and diploma courses at local tertiary education providers.
- Apprenticeships, if relevant to your industry.
- Conferences and symposiums.





Keep remuneration up with the times

Paying your people in line with the current job market is an essential part of any retention strategy, especially when the cost of living is creeping up. To keep in touch with market rates, you can monitor jobs on job sites to see what competitors are offering to pay. If you belong to an industry association, you might be able to access data about rates of pay. Sometimes you might only discover your pay levels are outdated when an employee gets a better offer.

Money is obviously an important part of remuneration, but extra benefits also play a part. Possibilities include health and life insurance, additional leave, free 'flu shots, a work phone and membership to a shopping benefits scheme like [Boost](#). Industry group membership fees, subsidised public transport cards and gym memberships are other sweeteners you can include in employee remuneration packages.



Always conduct an exit interview.

When you lose an employee, make sure you know why. While the information they provide could be painful, it helps you to fix or alter the work environment to retain the employees you still have. Exit interviews are best done by someone who's not an employee – a freelance HR consultant, for example. You need full disclosure, which could be awkward if the interviewer is the exiting employee's boss or colleague.

To give employees an opportunity to provide feedback before they get totally disgruntled, consider installing a suggestions box somewhere in the workplace. You can also run regular employee surveys to identify niggly problems before they become big issues.

[Check out an easy way to add a layer of benefits to your employees' remuneration.](#)

