

Recruiting and selecting talent

New Zealand organisations are facing unprecedented challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled people. The tight labour market and the increasing diversity of New Zealand's population are prompting employers to rethink their approaches to people management and create versatile workplaces that maximise available talent.

This toolkit outlines how to evaluate your existing recruitment procedures and develop a recruitment process that ensures you are tapping into the skills, experience and energy your organisation needs.

Retaining new staff

Before reviewing your recruitment procedures conduct a workplace survey to assess how your employees view the workplace. Prioritise staff retention and make any practical changes to create a versatile workplace that values people and their skills.

New employees' experience once hired is critical to their retention. Although having a fair and transparent recruitment process is important, the workplace climate or culture will determine whether new recruits stay. For example, if there are forms of discrimination such as pay inequity, poor advancement opportunities, exclusion from key job assignments and social isolation, or the company culture is incongruent with what new employees were led to believe during recruitment, they are likely to leave.

If staff turnover is high, determine why people are leaving your organisation; is it due to their a need for more flexible working options or better work-life balance? Are they being headhunted by competitors, or is it as a result of bullying and unhappiness in your workplace?

Your organisation's recruitment profile

Assess the recruitment profile of your organisation by collecting information on recruitment and turnover over a 6 or 12 month period. This will highlight any trends or discrepancies within your workplace. Then identify your workplace goals for recruitment and selection, and decide who will be responsible for monitoring and updating the procedures.

Collect information on:

- Who applied for jobs in your organisation in the last year (by gender, age, ethnicity, disability, family status if provided¹).
- Who reached the interview stage in the last year (by gender, age, ethnicity, disability, family status if provided).
- How did they hear about the position.
- Who was appointed within the last year (by gender, age, ethnicity, disability, family status if provided).
- From the new recruits, how long did they stay with your organisation.

¹ While it is illegal to base employment decisions on this information, you are entitled to ask people for the information, provided you advise that it is solely in order to monitor your employment procedures. They are not obliged to provide this information.

- What is the average length of service within your organisation.
- Employee turnover figures for the last year.
- Relevant performance and productivity figures.

The [Creating a workforce profile spreadsheet \(134K\)](#) will also assist you with an overview of the gender, ethnicity and age structure of your organisation.

Equitable remuneration

Is your organisation valuing, promoting and rewarding all staff on the basis of merit? It is important to collect and audit the following:

- Information on salaries – what is the average starting salary in your organisation, does it vary by employee group eg. gender, full-time or part-time roles, ability and ethnicity (if these have been disclosed).
- The average salary increase in your organisation.
- The eligibility for bonus schemes or non-cash benefits in your organisation.
- How your workforce is divided up into salary levels and grades; are there differences by employee group or job roles.
- The current remuneration systems and arrangements, and if there is a system used for reviewing employees' performance and rewards.
- Employees' feedback on the current remuneration arrangements. You can collect this information through climate surveys or exit interviews.
- Does your workplace have goals for equitable remuneration? Now is a good opportunity to develop these and plan accordingly if you do not already have these goals in place.
- Develop key performance indicators to measure employees' progress.

For more comprehensive information on pay and employment equity go to the [HRINZ website](#) for resources developed by the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women.

Recruitment

Purpose of the job and what it involves

Conduct a job analysis for the vacancy before you advertise. Criteria to consider should include the:

- Purpose of the role
- Key areas of responsibility and expected outcomes
- Structure of the work (including hours of work, level of flexibility etc)
- Reporting relationships and levels of authority
- Working relationships
- Performance standards and salary range
- Knowledge, skills and attributes required to do the job
- Working locations, travel and conditions.

? Can a current staff member move into this position as a development opportunity?

? Can the job be done on a part-time or job-share basis, or does it have to be full-time? Why has the vacancy come about, did the previous person leave due to stress, boredom, other commitments etc?

? What flexible work options are available?

- **Prepare an accurate job description.**

This will cover the work that will be done and should include a position title, key result areas, reporting relationships and level of authority. Use simple, clear language. The job description is an ongoing document and can be used to evaluate the job, form the basis of performance reviews and indicate training needs.

- **Create a profile of the ideal job applicant.**

This will outline the essential skills and experience you feel the applicant should have. Emphasise the task and not the method you think suits the job. Research has shown that diverse teams are more creative and productive when managed well. Use common sense and be open to change.

- **Ensure you are complying with legislation.**

In particular the Human Rights Act, Privacy Act, and the Employment Relations Act. The legislation will influence what you write in your advertisements and the questions you ask during interviews. All questions and information requested must be relevant to the job and the person's ability to do that job. How you collect and keep information, what you report back to applicants, and how you arrive at your recruitment decisions need to comply with these laws.

For a brief overview of these laws see our [legislation summary](#). More detailed information is available on the government legislation website www.legislation.govt.nz, or you could consult the [Human Rights Commission](#).

- **Advertise the position widely.**

Avoid direct or implied bias in the ads on the basis of gender, age, family status, irrelevant qualifications, experience, and so on.

- **Use the EEO Employers Group logo** in your ads if you are a member.

Make it clear that you welcome applications from a diverse range of people eg. "We welcome applicants with appropriate skills".

- **Use recruitment agents that are members of the EEO Employers Group.**

[See the current list of members](#) and a [list of supported recruitment services](#).

- **Provide all applicants with an accurate job description.**

Information on the recruitment and selection process, as well as on the company profile is helpful. Include a closing date and variety of reply methods to ensure people are not being disadvantaged eg. offer postal, email, fax details etc.

Interviewing and selecting the best person for the job

- **Identify the most important aspects of the role.**

Use a structured process that tests the skills, knowledge and experience needed to fulfil the job.

- **Develop interview questions.**
From the job description, create questions that relate to the job. All applicants should be asked the same core questions.
- **Incorporate a structured interview and combine selection methods.**
Often it is more effective to combine the interview with work sample tests, assessments, cognitive or aptitude testing, and structured references. Less effective methods rely on past work experience, written references, academic achievements and unstructured interviews. All the above methods have limitations and do not often measure cultural fit or the potential for applicants to learn new skills.
- **Use a selection panel.**
Everyone sees and assesses people differently; a diverse panel will ensure there is no tunnel-vision prejudice. The panel will need to be trained and aware of EEO and relevant legislation.
- **Use a set selection form for all interviews.**
Ask all applicants the same questions and record their responses on the forms. Shortlist according to how interviewees rated on the forms.
- **Accessible interviews.**
Ensure all applicants have the chance to a fair interview and that the process and venue are accessible.
 - ? Is the interview room easy to find? Consider wheelchair access, communication aids, or a sign language translator.
- **Ask the applicant if they have any questions** and indicate when a decision will be made regarding the position.
- **Offer the option of supported or whanau interviews.**
Be prepared if applicants have indicated that they will be bringing people. Some cultures refrain from self-promotion and an elder or friend will be able to describe the applicant's achievements or personality. Refer to the EEO Trust publication, [*Making a difference - Why and how to work effectively with Māori*](#).
- **Be aware of your own reactions.**
 - Getting on with someone and having a good chat in the interview does not mean they will do a great job.
 - Someone's confidence (high or low) doesn't necessarily indicate how they will behave in the role.
 - Mirror-hiring, or hiring people because they are like you, creates a group of people with similar opinions, experiences and backgrounds. Solutions and outcomes reached are often less dynamic or innovative than you would get from a diverse group of people.

- Cultural differences may dictate whether someone looks you in the eye, shakes your hand, makes small talk, highlights their achievements etc.
- Stereotyping the person you want for the role will limit your decision.
- Assumptions are not valid decision factors eg “disabled people will need more time off.” In fact research has shown that disabled people take less time off (see [Employing disabled people toolkit](#))
- Assess the applicants’ selection form against the written job description again.

Shortlist the top candidates and conduct second interviews. Indicate the timeframe and when a decision will be reached.

Conduct structured reference checks with the applicant’s consent. Ask previous employers questions relevant to the role.

Re-advertise or re-interview if you have not found the right person for the job. Hiring the wrong person can be expensive and time consuming.

[See Tapping into Talent toolkit for more information on recruiting procedures.](#)

Appointing staff

Once you and the panel have reached a decision:

- Have a legal contract drawn up. Verbally offering someone a job can be legally binding. The contract will need to be signed before the employee starts work. You will need to consider and explain method of payment, leave entitlements, holiday provisions and starting date etc.
- Once the applicant has accepted the offer, let the other applicants know they have been unsuccessful.
- Ask the successful applicant whether they need any modifications to their workstation or external support from employment support providers such as Catapult Employment Services, Workbridge Incorporated, ASENZ, ACC etc.

Induction and getting new staff started

- Ask people for the name they wish to be called by. Take the time to learn how to pronounce it correctly.
- Check with disabled people what they would like their colleagues to know about their impairment and who would be the most appropriate person to inform them, if at all.
- Give new staff an opportunity to visit the workplace before they begin.
- For the new employee’s first few weeks, arrange a support person or buddy who can help introduce them to the work routines, facilities and other employees.
- Avoid overloading people in their first few days as this can create stress and skew expectations.
- Schedule training on EEO, harassment etc.
- Schedule a meeting with the new employee after their first few weeks to touch base and hear how they are managing.