



Learner-Focused, Industry-Led,
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EMPLOYER TOOLKIT

employertoolkitnz.org



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This document should be read with the following considerations in mind.

- **Timeliness of Information:** The information presented reflects the state of knowledge and industry standards at the time of publication. As the sector evolves, some information may become outdated or require revisions.
- **Intended Audience:** This toolkit is designed specifically for employers (business owners, supervisors, and managers) in the food and fibre sector. We recognise that while some content may be highly relevant to your work, other sections may not apply to your specific circumstances.
- **Introduction to Te Ao Māori Concepts:** The information and concepts presented provide a foundational understanding of te ao Māori. This toolkit serves as an introductory guide, and we encourage you to continue your educational journey, as understanding these concepts is an ongoing process.
- **Diversity and Inclusivity:** We acknowledge the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs of employees within the sector. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, and it's important to consider this diversity when applying the information in this toolkit.
- **Remuneration:** While the topic of remuneration is very important, it is not addressed in detail within this toolkit.
- **Legal Disclaimer:** The content of this toolkit is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. For legal matters, please seek the guidance of a qualified legal professional.
- **Additional Assistance:** If you require further assistance or specialised support, please consult the recommended formal resources provided in this toolkit.

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References to external sites are provided throughout the toolkit to support the reader with additional resources that may be more detailed, contextual, or live. While care has been taken to review these, we do not endorse nor bear any liability for the content or accuracy of these external sites.



You can visit our website employertoolkitnz.org to find more information and extra chapters on:

- Understanding your obligations as an employer
- Training and development

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Foreword

Why should we care about retaining our people?

Tēnā koe,

Having spent many years in the food and fibre sector, we know the value of our dedication and hard work. Our sector is the backbone of our economy, and without our workers, we wouldn't be able to produce the food and fibre that keeps Aotearoa New Zealand's economy going and growing. That's why we're deeply invested in addressing our employee retention issues, and why you should be too.

At Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (Food and Fibre CoVE), our research found that retention rates of new employees during their first 12 months of employment are low across many sectors, but the food and fibre sector performs far below average. We discovered some key driver of employees leaving were;

- Employees experiencing challenges with their mental health,
- Employees expectations of work not aligning with reality, and;
- Poor employee and manager relationships.

To help food and fibre employers address these challenges, we have created this toolkit to support employers to improve job satisfaction for employees and keep the right individuals in roles.

Replacing an employee can be costly—around 30% to 200% of an employee's annual wage to cover

recruitment expenses, lost productivity, and training time for a new hire. Furthermore, failing to meet your obligations as an employer can lead to legal troubles, adding even more cost and effort. Keeping an employee for more than a year can significantly reduce these costs. Satisfied workers are more productive which directly improves financial performance and the quality of our work. So, keeping our workers more satisfied isn't just the right thing to do—it's essential for our business.

Creating a respectful and inclusive environment is a priority across the sector. Encouraging te ao Māori to be a part of your workplace can be pivotal in this journey. Approximately 1 in 5 of our employees have whakapapa Māori, and this number continues to grow. Our toolkit offers guidance in incorporating some elements of te ao Māori into everyday work, which aims to enhance relations with Māori employees, keep our Māori workforce, and enrich our overall practices.

I hope this toolkit serves as a valuable resource, offering practical advice to improve employee retention. By investing in our workers, we invest in the future of our food and fibre sector.

Nāku noa, nā,

Paul Hollings
General Manager Food and Fibre CoVE



1

Attracting the Right Individuals



Attracting the Right Individuals

How do I hire the right people who will stay and thrive in their role?

Finding the right individuals and giving them support can make all the difference in retaining them. Studies show that many new employees leave within the first 90 days because the job isn't what they expected. So, it's important you get the basics right from the beginning.

To help communicate what a good hiring process looks like, six steps have been outlined in the diagram below which you could take to increase your chances

of finding the right person. Following these steps can support a smooth experience for both you and the new employee, reducing the risk of them leaving. This chapter also refers to 'candidates'. This is simply people who have applied for a job.

Please note that the information provided in this chapter is not legal advice. If you are uncertain on any information presented, we recommend you seek advice from a professional.

The 6 steps of hiring good employees

1 Preparing



- Why should an employee work for you?
- How to communicate the job well?

2 Finding



- How do I write a job ad and gain interest?
- Where do I share a job ad?
- How do I hire migrant workers?

3 Assessing



- How do I choose who to interview?

4 Selecting



- How do I interview the candidates?
- How do I conduct a trial during an interview process?

5 Hiring



- How do I complete tests and checks?
- What are trials and probationary periods?
- How do I negotiate the employment agreement and pay?
- What Employment paperwork need to be completed?

6 Onboarding



- Why should I onboard?
- What should I do to prepare for onboarding?
- What should I do on day 1?
- What should I do during week 1?
- What should I do in the first three months?

¹ Jobvite, 2018. https://www.jobvite.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/2018_Job_Seeker_Nation_Study.pdf

Step 1: Preparing

Preparing for a new hire means having information ready to understand what you are looking for and why an employee should want to work for you. See our website for more information.



Tip Qualifications aren't always necessary. Sometimes, solid experience is just as valuable.



Top Tip

How do I communicate the job well?

It's important for both you and the candidate to have a clear understanding of what the job involves. Defining the skills, experience, qualifications, and the right 'fit' you're looking for can help you find the 'right person'. 'Fit' is about the candidate's personality and how well they align with your team's values.

It is also helpful to determine what the 'right person' for you will look like. They should have a mix of qualities that align with your needs and values. Discovering what this looks like for you can be easily done through writing down 4–5 traits you are looking for. Some examples are included below.

- **Understands the role:** they have a clear grasp of what the job involves and what will be expected of them.
- **Aligns to your expectations:** their values and work ethic match what you're looking for in an employee.
- **Willing to learn:** they show an eagerness to pick up new skills and adapt to new situations.
- **Resilient:** they can handle challenges and setbacks without losing motivation.

It's helpful to distinguish between 'must-haves' and 'nice-to-haves.' For instance, requiring a driver's licence might exclude capable candidates who could easily get one with a bit of support.

This approach leads to a smoother hiring process and decreases the risk that employees leave when reality does not meet their expectations. When candidates know what the job truly involves, they're less likely to leave after a few months because they feel misled.

Providing clarity is simple. Here's how you can do it:

- **Job Descriptions:** Ensure the job descriptions you advertise are clear, simple, and accurate (see the next section for an example).
- **Interview Process:** During interviews, reinforce the realities of the role—both the good and the challenging aspects (see further down for more information).

Your people and their whānau (family)

Hiring a new employee isn't just about ticking the legal boxes – it is also about welcoming a whole person into your team. Think about the life experiences they've shared and how these can shape their time at your workplace. Remember, you're not just hiring an individual; they come with their family, friends, and colleagues who support them.

This is especially true when employing Māori. Being part of a unit – their whānau, community, and network – can be incredibly important. It plays a big role in their success and, in turn, the success of your workplace. Incorporating these values means including whānau where appropriate during the hiring process, such as during interviews. Embracing this can help create a more supportive and thriving environment for everyone.

Step 2: Finding

The most flexible way to find candidates is through advertisements which can be shared in different places. Using the advice on page 7 about how to communicate the role during this process is important to gain interest from the right people.

Other ways can be used too, such as through an industry specific recruitment agency or through your networks (see page 10 for more information on use of networks).

When advertising a job, it's important to make it straightforward and simple for candidates to apply.

Choosing the right application method for the role is also key to finding the right person.

How do I write a job ad and gain interest?

The first impression your candidates will have of your role is likely through a job ad, so it's important to get it right. Below is an example of a job ad for a dairy farm hand role. Even if this specific job isn't relevant to your business, we've described on the right what each part of the job ad should contain to ensure clear communication.



Job Ad Description Example

The job title is the first thing candidates will see. It should be clear and accurately reflect the role. It is important to use terms that those looking for the role will recognise and understand.

A brief introduction about your business helps candidates understand who they might be working for and why they should be interested.

Clearly stating the skills, experience, and personality type needed helps you attract suitable candidates. If there are some harder sells for the job (such as early working hours, remote location), this is where this should go.

Simple application instructions make it easy for interested candidates to apply.

This should also depend on the role. A CV and cover letter is not always needed, see below for more information.

Job Title: Dairy Farm Hand

Location: Matamata, Waikato, New Zealand

About us: We are a family-owned dairy farm that has been operating successfully for 20 years. Our farm is a supportive and friendly place to work, and we are looking for someone who would be a great addition to the team. We value hard work to get the job done.

Quick Role Description: We are looking for a Farm Hand to assist with daily tasks including feeding animals, milking, and general farm maintenance. This is a great opportunity for someone who loves working outdoors and is interested in learning more about dairy farming and working hard.

Key Responsibilities:

- Feeding and caring for livestock
- Assisting with milking
- Maintaining farm equipment and facilities
- Monitoring animal health

Requirements:

- Right to work in New Zealand
- Prior experience in dairy farming is a plus but not required
- Physical fitness and ability to work outdoors in all weather conditions
- Strong work ethic and reliability
- Ability to work well in a team

Benefits:

- Competitive hourly rate
- Opportunity to learn new skills and grow within the business
- Supportive and friendly team environment
- Accommodation available on-site

How to Apply: To apply, please send your CV and a brief cover letter to [email@example.com] or call [phone number] for more information.

Closing Statement: We look forward to hearing from you.

Knowing where the job is located helps candidates decide if they can commute or need to relocate.

A concise summary of what the job involves helps candidates quickly understand the role.

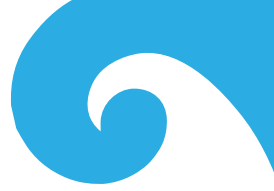
Listing the main duties gives candidates a clear idea of what their day-to-day work will involve. This helps communicate the realities of the role.

The more specific you can be, the better.

Highlighting what you offer can make your job ad more attractive. Why should this person choose your business and not your competitors?

If you are providing competitive pay or benefits, this is also the place to call this out.

A friendly sign-off encourages candidates to take the next step.



Where do I share a job ad?

Once you've created a job ad, it's important to get as much traction and interest as possible to find the right person. Posting your job ad in multiple places can increase your chances of finding the ideal candidate.

Here are some options:

- **Job Ad Websites:** Use dedicated job ad websites to reach a wide audience
- **Social Media Groups:** Post in relevant social media groups, like on Facebook
- **Local Community Boards:** Put up your ad on local community boards.

Finding School Leavers

For entry-level positions, it might be helpful to reach out to local high schools to see if any upcoming school leavers are interested in your role. Taking the time to meet those who show interest and explaining the job face-to-face can be a great way to get them excited about joining your business.

If you're running a larger operation, think about offering an internship programme where students can work for you over the summer. This gives them a taste of the job and lets you see how they'd fit in as full-time workers if you're looking to hire them once they finish school.

Word of mouth is also effective. Ask current employees and trusted friends and family members if they know anyone who might be interested. Even when using word of mouth, it's helpful to send the job ad to the candidate so they know the skills and experience you're looking for.

When using social media, you can shorten the job ad to convey just the essential information in a quick and casual way. Also think about how the candidate will apply for the job. Provide a simple and clear method for them to get in touch (see the next section for more information).

Applications

Before you post your role, it's important to think about how candidates will apply. There are a range of different methods, ranging from formal to informal, including:

- CV
- Cover Letter
- Phone Call
- Application Form.

When deciding on the application method, consider the skills you're looking for. If the role is hands-on and needs someone skilled in operating equipment, then reading and writing ability may not be as important. In these cases, CVs and cover letters might not attract the right candidates. Instead, a simple application form or use of a phone call could be more effective.

Once you have decided what method you want to use, make sure you add the application directions to the bottom of your job ad.

How Do I Hire Migrant Workers?

Where you look for workers can greatly impact the quality of candidates you find. While Aotearoa New Zealand offers a great pool of potential workers, sometimes looking abroad can help you find the skills you need.

To hire people from overseas, there are schemes and visas available which will help you in your search. See the Employment NZ website or Immigration New Zealand website for more information.



Step 3: Assessing

Once you have your candidates' information and applications, it's important to select who you want to talk with further to understand more about them.

How do I choose who to interview?

Once you have;

- understood your needs (experience, qualifications, fit), and
- posted your job ad across various platforms and channels

you should have a good handful of applicants interested in the role.

You don't need to interview everyone. Pick around two to four people based on what they say they can bring to the job. Here's how to do it:

- **Match to Criteria:** Look for candidates whose skills, experience, and qualifications closely match what you're looking for
- **Consider Fit:** Think about the personality and values of the candidates and how well they might fit with your team.

Once you've decided who to interview, give them a phone call to offer an interview or a time to chat. This initial conversation is also a good chance to get a sense of what they are like.

It is important at this time to respond to all unsuccessful candidates, thanking them for their time and effort, and informing them that they will not be progressing further in the selection process. Be prepared for some candidates to request feedback on their application and areas for improvement.

By carefully selecting candidates and making contact, you ensure that you're investing time in the people who are most likely to be a good fit for your role.

Step 4: Selecting

'Interviewing' the chosen candidates can range from a casual conversation to a formal question-based interview. It's important to consider the kind of person you are looking for, the type of business you run, and the technical skills and experience you need to decide on the best selection method.

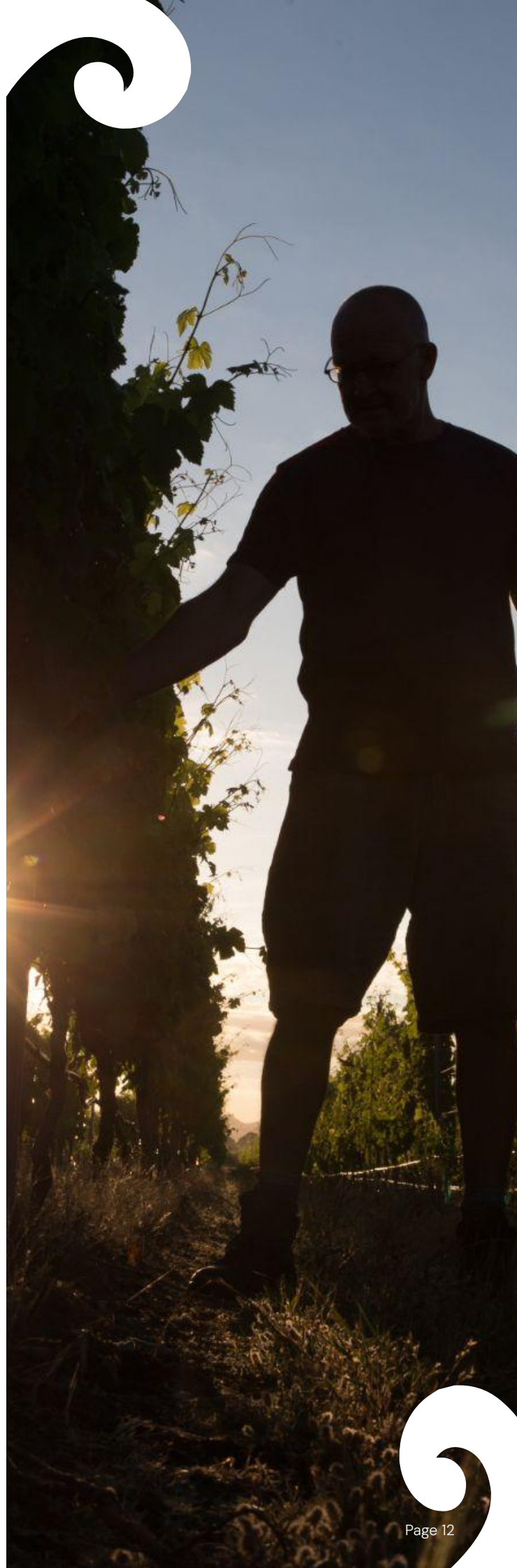
No matter which method you use, focus on getting to know the person. Utilising whakawhanaungatanga—making and keeping connections—can be a great concept to use during this step and throughout your relationship with the candidate. By focusing on building connections and getting to know each other, the candidate is likely to have an authentic experience and accurate image of your business.

How do I interview the candidates?

Completing interviews, or having conversations with candidates, can be as casual or formal as you like.



Tip During interviews, it's important to be aware that not all cultures talk about themselves the same way. Being accommodating and focusing on skills and experience can help make sure you don't discount their abilities. Providing the opportunity for interviewees to have a support person with them can also be valuable.



Interview types

Type	Description	Pros	Cons
Casual	This can look like meeting up for a cup of coffee and having a conversation with the candidate about their experience and what they can bring to the role. Specific questions may not be needed if the role doesn't require much technical skill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Short and simple ✓ Can put you and the candidate at ease ✓ Great for roles which don't need much experience ✓ Great to get to know the personality of the applicant better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ May be too short and informal to fully understand a candidate's qualifications and experience ✗ May not give you an opportunity to ask all the questions you need ✗ Answers may not be remembered as not recorded
Semi-Formal	This sits between the casual and formal types. This can look like a more formal conversation with the candidate where some predetermined questions are asked. However, these questions don't need to be scored or recorded and the conversation can be more flexible to cater to each candidate. This still looks like a conversation in a comfortable space for both you and the candidate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensures answers which help evaluate a candidate's ability to complete the job ✓ Helps assess candidates as answers can be compared ✓ Can put the candidate at ease as more of a casual approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ As answers are not being scored or recorded it may be hard to remember what each candidate said ✗ Flexible approach may mean each candidate is not asked the same questions making comparison harder
Formal	This can look like a sit down interview in a private room where you ask the candidate a list of set questions, write and record their answers, and score the answers against predefined criteria. This type of interview makes sense for more technical roles in a larger business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Scored approach means it is easier to evaluate candidates against each other ✓ Recorded answers means better memory of what each candidate said ✓ Provides a thorough way of assessing and comparing candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Requires more preparation and effort ✗ More formal approach may not be appropriate for the role or the desired candidates ✗ Can be uncomfortable for candidates who are not used to interviews, meaning a true representation of the person isn't given

Many industry specific questions have been published online. You can find links for this on our website.



Tip Some questions should not be asked during the interview process as they can be seen as discriminatory. The Employment NZ website has a list of these questions.

How do I conduct a pre-employment trial during an interview process?

It is possible during the interview process to ask the job applicant to perform tasks so you can assess whether they have the skills needed for the job. This is called a pre-employment trial, but it's important to follow proper procedures to ensure it is not considered employment. See more information on the Employment NZ website.



Step 5: Hiring

The hiring process has a few steps involved to ensure that you are hiring the right person. More information on many of the steps below can be found on our website or on Employment NZ (e.g. trials and probationary periods, employment agreements and pay).

How do I complete tests and checks?

As an employer, you can use tests and checks before and during employment. This can include a:

- criminal history check,
- drug and alcohol test (if relevant to the job), and
- visa check.

More information can be found on the Employment NZ website on how to legally conduct these tests.

It is also important during this time that you get two to three referees from the candidate. A referee is someone trustworthy who can vouch for the skills and experience of a candidate. You should call these referees to check that the person you plan to hire has the experience and qualifications they say they do. For school leavers who have limited job history, doing a reference check with a teacher can be a good substitute. You can also check if there has been any employment issues with this person in the past.

What are employment trials and probationary periods?

To assess a new employee's performance, a 90-day trial or probationary period can be used. During this time, you can evaluate the employee's ability to do the role and decide if they meet performance expectations. By including a 90-day employment trial or probationary period in the employment agreement, you can make sure that the employee is a good fit for your team and business. More information can be found on the Employment NZ website.

How do I negotiate the employment agreement and pay?

Once you are satisfied with the tests and checks you have completed for your candidate, it is time to formalise the employment relationship by signing an employment agreement.

This is also a great time to think about whether you want to provide anything above the legal minimum entitlements, such as extra leave or higher pay. These benefits can also be considered during the initial step of the hiring process (preparing) as they can be used as selling points to attract exceptional candidates.

By formalising the employment relationship with a well-drafted agreement and considering additional benefits, you can set a positive tone for your new hire and ensure clarity from the start.





What employment paperwork needs to be completed?

Legally, there is mandatory paperwork that must be completed when you hire a new employee. This includes:

- Signed employment agreement
- Details and proof of a visa, residency or citizenship
- IR330 tax declaration
- Kiwisaver forms
- Setting up records of wages, time, leave and holidays
- Emergency contact details
- Bank account number for wages (if agreed as the payment method).

If this is your first employee, you must register as an employer with Inland Revenue who will advise ACC. See the Inland Revenue website on how to set up employees, especially as a first time employer.

Step 6: Onboarding

Having a strong onboarding process is crucial to retaining employees. The first three months on the job are essential as a poor welcome can be a strong motivator for new hires to leave.

Why should I onboard new employees?

Welcoming new employees is important for several reasons:

- **Smooth Transition:** It helps them quickly get used to the way you do business and who their teammates are
- **Role Clarity:** Good onboarding helps new team members understand their role and what is expected of them
- **Training and Productivity:** Accurately training employees on their tasks boosts productivity and overall job satisfaction
- **Workplace Culture:** Good onboarding makes the new employee feel welcomed into your workplace culture, enhancing their wellbeing at work.

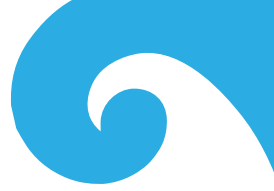
By focusing on how the employee feels about their work and how integrated they are into the workplace, you can significantly boost the chance of them staying with your business longer.

What should I do to prepare for onboarding?

Before your new employee arrives, it's important to inform your team and prepare for the onboarding process. This includes setting up a buddy system, which you can read more about in chapter 3, Workplace Wellbeing and Culture. Here are some steps to take during this phase:

- **Inform Current Employees:** Let your team know about the new arrival and what their role will be
- **Identify a Buddy:** Choose a buddy for the new employee who can help them settle in
- **Prepare the Buddy:** Provide the buddy with checklists of what needs to be completed and the expectations of their role
- **Schedule Training and Induction Sessions:** Organise any necessary training and induction sessions to help the new employee get up to speed.





What should I do on day one?

An employee's first day should be relaxed while focused on setting them up with the right information and letting them get to know the team. While onboarding plans will differ from business to business, some suggested activities are listed below:

Manager Responsibilities

- **Meet and Greet:** Meet the employee at an agreed location and time on their first day. Depending on how you conduct your welcomes, a mihi whakatau or a pōwhiri may be an appropriate way to welcome your new employee. For more information see chapter 2, Māori Cultural Confidence
- **Introductions (whakawhanaungatanga):** Introduce the employee to the team and their buddy to build connections and relationships
- **Complete Paperwork:** Finalise any outstanding paperwork (see above for more information)
- **End-of-Day Meeting:** Schedule a brief meeting at the end of the day to address any questions or concerns.

Buddy Responsibilities (or other responsible person)

- **Tour:** Give them a tour of the grounds or facilities
- **Policies and Procedures:** Go over key business policies or procedures
- **Health and Safety:** Provide a health and safety briefing
- **Training and Induction:** Deliver scheduled training and induction sessions for their role
- **Equipment Setup:** Ensure the new employee has all the right equipment.

What should I do during week one?

The first week should build on the activities of day one, ensuring the new employee feels welcomed and comfortable with their role and expectations. Here are some suggestions:

Manager Responsibilities

- **End-of-Week Meeting:** Schedule a meeting at the end of the week to discuss the employee's progress and any challenges they might be facing. Allow time for the new employee to provide feedback and address any questions or concerns.

Buddy Responsibilities (or other responsible person)

- **Training and Induction:** Complete any scheduled training and induction sessions for their role
- **Tool and System Familiarity:** Ensure the employee is comfortable using all necessary tools and systems
- **Shadowing Sessions:** Set up shadowing sessions where the new employee can observe their buddy or a colleague to learn about day-to-day tasks
- **Planning:** Set a plan for the following months to ensure the employee is confident in their role.

What should I do in the first three months?

The next three months builds upon the activities of week one to ensure the new employee is confident in their role, understands what is expected of them, and delivers to the best of their ability. Here are some suggested actions:

Manager Responsibilities

- **Skill Development:** Identify areas where skill development is needed and build a plan to address this. See our website for a step by step process of how to effectively do this
- **Setting Expectations:** Set clear expectations for the role and performance moving forward.

Buddy Responsibilities (or other responsible person)

- **Regular Check-ins:** Conduct regular check-ins to ensure the employee is fitting in well
- **Ongoing Training:** Continue delivering training and induction sessions as needed
- **Skill Assessment:** Test the employee's ability to operate tools and equipment if necessary.



What does a good attraction process look like?

To help you understand how all the steps of the hiring process link together, three case studies have been detailed below to show how outcomes can change based on the hiring experience.

Case Study 1 – Needs Addressing

Description: Eleanor is an owner of a horticulture business who was looking for a role which requires around two years of experience.

Preparing: Eleanor wanted to hire as quickly as she could so she didn't take time to understand what her business offered their employees or define what skills and experience she was clearly looking for.

Finding: An old job ad was used from three years prior when she was looking for a similar role to advertise the position. Even though some aspects of the job ad aren't accurate, Eleanor didn't think it impacted too much on who applied.

She posted this ad across a few platforms.

Assessing: Eleanor was disappointed when only two people applied for the role. Even though neither of them had the experience or skill she really needed, she decided to interview them anyway.

Selecting: After a quick phone call with both applicants, she decided to hire Barry. Barry was the elder of the two candidates and Eleanor thought he would have more maturity. She figured out their ages by asking for their birthdays.

Hiring: Eleanor sent the employment agreement over to Barry the next day without completing any tests or checks.

Onboarding: When Barry turned up on the first day he was introduced to a few members of his team and given the equipment he needed to complete the job. He wasn't offered any support on how to learn his role. Barry felt very stressed as he had no previous experience in the job as he had expressed to Eleanor.

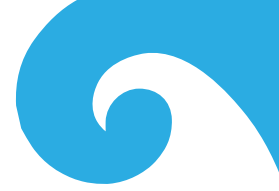
Outcome: Barry ended up leaving the role after two months. He felt unsure on what was expected of him and how to do the job. Although Barry expressed his inexperience in the role during the hiring process, he felt he was not trained or supported to learn on the job.

What worked well:

- ✓ Posted the job ad across multiple platforms
- ✓ Used an employment agreement

What needs improvement:

- ✗ Did not define why an employee should work for the business
- ✗ Did not use an updated and accurate job ad
- ✗ Hired the better candidate who applied, but not the right person for the role. Eleanor should have redone the steps to get better experienced candidates
- ✗ Did not interview in-person
- ✗ Did not spend time getting to know the candidate and their experience
- ✗ Asked an illegal interview question about the age of the candidates
- ✗ Did not complete tests and checks
- ✗ Did not provide an opportunity to negotiate the employment agreement
- ✗ Did not provide a supportive onboarding experience
- ✗ Did not provide training on missing skills and experience



Case Study 2 – Doing Well

Description: Dale is a manager at a forestry business who was looking for a role which requires little to no experience as on the job learning is expected.

Preparing: Dale was able to successfully pull together the basic skills and experience he was looking for in the role. He also created a list of benefits employees get from working at the business.

Finding: Dale pulled together a basic job ad using online resources and posted this ad in Facebook groups and on established job seeking platforms.

However, as he was concerned that he wouldn't get much traction for the role, he decided to flourish and exaggerate some aspects of the job ad to gain interest.

Assessing: Dale received many applications for the role, many which seemed to come from career changers. He chose the top three candidates to interview by their writing abilities in the application form.

Selecting: As skill and experience isn't a large requirement of the role, Dale opted for a casual interview style. He chose Sarah as the preferred candidate as she seemed passionate about what the business could offer her in her new career.

Hiring: Dale completed important tests and checks on Sarah, including drugs and alcohol tests, police background checks, and referee checks.

Once he received the results and was satisfied he sent a draft employment agreement over to Sarah to look over and comment on.

Onboarding: On Sarah's first day, she was greeted by Barry and her buddy for her onboarding, Shawn. Shawn was in Sarah's exact shoes two years ago – new to the job with little experience. Across Sarah's first few months, Shawn taught her everything she would need to know to do her role in forestry, with a special focus on health and safety. Shawn also made sure to introduce Sarah to all of the team as early on as possible.

Outcome: Although Sarah felt very welcomed into the role by Dale and Shawn and believed it would be the perfect opportunity for her career change, the realities of the job did not align with what she was sold in the job ad and interview. Sarah tried to stay because of how much she felt welcomed by the people, but only lasted 6 months before resigning.

What worked well

- ✓ Defined the skills and experience needed
- ✓ Defined the perks of the job
- ✓ Created a new job ad
- ✓ Posted the job ad across multiple platforms
- ✓ Interviewed in a way suitable for the role
- ✓ Completed tests and checks
- ✓ Sent over an employment agreement for negotiation
- ✓ Welcoming onboarding experience
- ✓ Trained on missing skills and experience

What needs improvement

- ✗ Did not define 'fit' for the role
- ✗ Exaggerated the perks of the role without acknowledging the realities
- ✗ Did not choose candidates based on what will make them successful in the job (i.e. based selection on writing abilities)



Case Study 3 – Excelling

Description: Trent is an owner of an apiculture business who was looking for a basic entry role.

Preparing: Trent understands how costly it is to constantly rehire and train new employees. Therefore, he spent time considering who would be suited to this role (fit)? What would they be looking for and act like? What key basic skills and experience would they have, and was this needed for an entry role?

This helped him form the basis of his job ad.

Finding: Using a new job ad, Trent made sure to highlight both the positives and realities of the role. He wanted to make sure he attracted a person who knew from the beginning what they were getting into.

Trent advertised using schools as he wanted to hire a recent school leaver. This was with the aim of attracting someone that could grow and was eager to learn.

Assessing: As Trent didn't sugar coat the role and advertised to a smaller pool of people, he took a hit in how many applicants he had.

However, out of the three applications he received they all seemed of high quality and people who he would want to interview.

Selecting: As Trent was interviewing school leavers, he opted for a semi-formal interview style with some key questions he wanted answers to dotted throughout. He wanted the interview to feel like a conversation where he got to know the person. He also wanted the applicants to feel at ease as they likely had never done an interview before.

He decided to hire Jack who had a passion for learning and interest in apiculture.

Hiring: Trent completed basic tests on checks on Jack, including a police background check and referee checks. When these were complete he sent the employment agreement over to Jack to agree on.

Onboarding: On Jack's first day, Trent met with him and introduced him to his buddy Kyle. They both took him around the business and introduced him to the team. As it was Jack's first ever job they made sure to develop a special training program which ensured he would have the basic skills and experience he needed for success within his first 4 months.

Outcome: As Jack understood what the role entailed, there were no surprises when there were parts of the job that were hard. However, having Trent and Kyle there to support him and teach him his role made him happy at work and excited to turn up each day. Jack is excited to have a career in apiculture and plans to stay with Trent until he is ready to open up his own business.

What worked well

- ✓ Defined the 'fit' needed
- ✓ Defined the skills and experience needed
- ✓ Defined perks of the job
- ✓ Defined realities of the job
- ✓ Created an accurate job ad
- ✓ Posted the job ad in a way that target the people that were needed
- ✓ Interviewed in a way suitable for the role
- ✓ Chose the hired candidate off qualities important for the role
- ✓ Completed tests and checks
- ✓ Sent over an employment agreement for negotiation
- ✓ Welcoming and supportive onboarding experience
- ✓ Specialised training to gain experience quickly

2

Māori Cultural Confidence



Māori Cultural Confidence

How do I grow my understanding of Māori experiences in the workplace?

The number of Māori employees in the food and fibre sector in Aotearoa New Zealand is steadily increasing, with one in five employees now identifying as Māori.

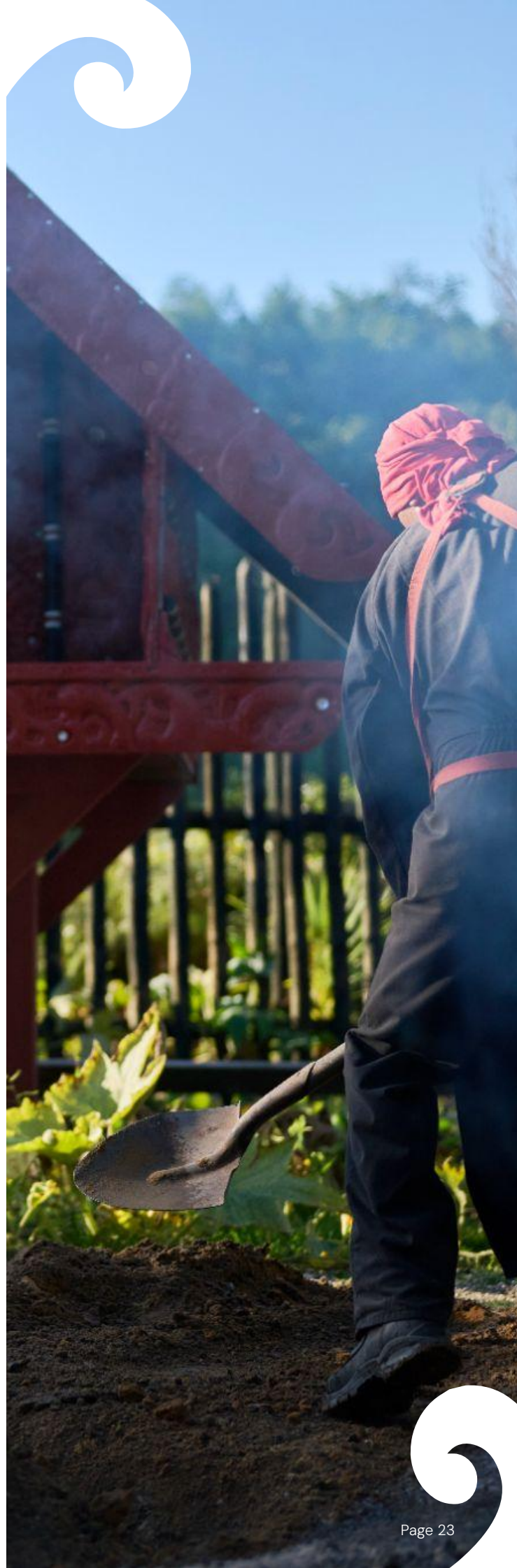


Currently, one in five employees in the sector identify as Māori.

Recognising and valuing the unique cultural perspectives of Māori employees is not only a matter of inclusivity and respect but also a strategic advantage. By creating an environment that embraces te ao Māori (the Māori world), employers can enhance workplace cohesion, improve employee satisfaction, and drive innovation.

Understanding the Māori worldview, cultural values, and practices can help you best support your Māori employees. Learning about another culture can be a lifelong journey, as what is common for some New Zealanders may hold deep cultural significance for others. This chapter is designed to build your confidence in engaging with Māori employees. It provides valuable insights and practical tips on incorporating te ao Māori into the workplace effectively, benefiting everyone involved.

We present introductory information into what you should know. Please see our website for further resources to help you on your journey.



Fundamental elements of te ao Māori

Te ao Māori, or the Māori world, is deeply connected to the natural environment. Like many indigenous cultures globally, Māori believe that we are not only from the land but of the land.

Mātauranga Māori² refers to Māori knowledge systems that have evolved over hundreds of years. This knowledge spans various topics, including education and kaitiakitanga (guardianship / stewardship) of the taiao (environment). While there have been historical conflicts with other knowledge systems, such as Western science, Mātauranga Māori exists alongside and complements these systems. Its application to the food and fibre sector continues to be explored and appreciated.

Example: Mātauranga Māori can be applied through the practice of rāhui, a traditional method of temporarily restricting access to certain resources to allow them to regenerate. A rāhui might be placed on a fishing area to ensure fish populations can recover, promoting sustainable harvesting and preserving marine biodiversity.

Example: Mātauranga Māori can be incorporated into soil health practices, by treating soil as a living entity with its own mauri (life force). This includes using methods like crop rotations, cover cropping and adding organic materials to improve the quality of the soil

Te reo and tikanga Māori are expressions of the Māori culture. Te reo Māori³ is the Māori language. Although there is one common language, there are many dialects across the country (for example in parts of the South Island there is the use of ng and in other areas they use k – Ngāi Tahu and Kāi Tahu are both used). Tikanga Māori⁴ are practices and customs that are widely accepted as to how things should be done within the Māori culture. For instance, a common tikanga is to avoid sitting on tables, as they are places where food is eaten. Understanding and respecting these practices can foster a more inclusive workplace.

Whakapapa⁵ is the concept of genealogy, crucial for understanding the connections between people, places, and events. It is fundamental to grasping identity, relationships, and heritage within the Māori culture. Recognising the importance of whakapapa can help employers appreciate the interconnectedness valued in Māori culture, enhancing workplace relationships and cohesion.



² Hirini Moko Mead, 2022.

<https://e-tangata.co.nz/comment-and-analysis/understanding-matauranga-maori/>

³ Reo Māori, 2024. <https://www.reomaori.co.nz/>

⁴ Hirini Moko Mead, 2016.

https://huiia.co.nz/products/tikanga-maori-living-by-maori-values-revised-ed?srsId=AfmBOoq8ltwjtJMs_zgs-OaWdOgT7MKFNUWgP-ENDU7gMGR-mrhT_Blrt

⁵ Rāwuru Taonui, 2011.

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/whakapapa-genealogy>

Informing your workplace culture

Māori experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand are deeply connected to the natural environment. There is a long and rich history between Māori and the food and fibre sector, nurtured over many generations and continuing to thrive today.

Embracing a values-based approach in the workplace

Although Te ao Māori is diverse, it is generally guided by key values. Here are some of these values and how they can be applied in a food and fibre workplace.

Whanaungatanga (Kinship and Relationships)

Whanaungatanga emphasises building strong connections between people to create a sense of belonging. This value can help everyone work together towards common goals while strengthening the community or workplace.

Practically, this may look like:

- **Building relationships**
 - **Getting to know your Māori employees** – spend time getting to know them personally. This creates space for Māori staff to share their whakapapa through the use of their pepeha (type of introduction). Show genuine interest in who they are, their whānau (family), and what drew them to this kind of mahi (work).
 - **Letting your employees get to know you** – create opportunities for your employees to get to know you too. Share who you are, where you're from, and a bit about your whānau.
 - **Engaging with your community** – foster connections with the local community by supporting local initiatives and encouraging employees to get involved.

- **Sustaining relationships**

- **Scheduling one-on-one meetings** – regularly discuss their experiences and goals, showing that you are interested in their growth and wellbeing.
- **Involve your Māori workers in conversations** – share opportunities that align with their culture. They may be new to your business, but have insights that could be beneficial to your business objectives.

Manaakitanga (Caring and respecting others)

Manaakitanga is about fostering a positive and collaborative environment by caring for and respecting each other. This encourages everyone to work together, building a workplace where everyone feels valued.

Practically, this may look like:

- **Checking in with your employees:** consistently support their mental, physical, cultural and social wellbeing. For more information see chapter 3, Workplace Wellbeing and Culture
- **Acknowledge and celebrate achievements and efforts:** show gratitude for hard work, such as a morning tea.

Kaitiakitanga (Stewardship)

Kaitiakitanga involves creating a balanced relationship with people and nature to live sustainably. This could mean managing and protecting natural resources for future generations. In your workplace, you can practise kaitiakitanga by encouraging sustainable practices and respecting the environment.

Practically, this might look like:

- **Implementing waste management practices:** minimise waste and promote recycling and composting within the workplace and community

- **Leading efforts to look after native species:** actions such as planting riparian and other native bush especially close to waterways, contribute meaningfully to kaitiakitanga
- **Creating opportunities for tikanga** for example, ask your staff if they would like karakia (incantations) to take place before cutting down flax or other natural resources
- **Supporting Māori employees to use maramataka (Māori lunar calendar) practices:** the traditional Māori lunar calendar can guide planting, harvesting, fishing, and hunting. Matariki, signalling the start of a new year, is another example of maramataka Māori in alignment with the lunar calendar.

Understanding these values can help create a supportive and inclusive workplace. When these values are put into practice, they can help Māori employees feel valued and respected.

Getting to know Māori culture and supporting your people

Language

There are many ways to incorporate te reo Māori in your workplace. Here are a few tips and helpful resources to support this effort:

- **Pronouncing people's names and place names correctly:** Ensure you pronounce people's names and place names correctly. A guide on te reo Māori pronunciation can be found on reomaori.co.nz. If in doubt, ask the person how to pronounce their name correctly.
- **Incorporating basic words:** use words such as *kia ora* (hello, thank you, be well) in workplace conversations. It is very common to include te reo Māori in daily conversations like "whānau" and "mahī". Reomaori.co.nz has examples of everyday words you can incorporate into your workplace.
- **Recognising and celebrating te reo Māori:** participate in Māori language week, te Wiki o te Reo Māori and the Māori language month, otherwise known as Mahuru Māori to celebrate and promote the use of te reo Māori. More information can be found on reomaori.co.nz.

Cultural practices

Tikanga Māori are practices that can be incorporated into the workplace. Below are some examples, recognising that some may be more relevant to your work than others.

- **Land based-practices:** consider following protocols when engaging with the land, such as seeking permission from local iwi (tribe) before accessing particular sites or harvesting natural resources. Find out which local marae are near you to talk to, using Te Kāhui Māngai (Directory of Iwi and Māori Organisations) through this website - www.tkm.govt.nz.
- **Meeting practices:** be open to including karakia at the start and end of meetings to set the intentions for a hui (meeting). This only takes 30 seconds. It is also common to hear karakia before harvesting crops or resources such as flax. Discuss with your Māori staff whether this is something they see value in.
- **Welcoming practices:** depending on your location, visitors may be welcomed with a mihi whakatau or a pōwhiri (welcoming ceremonies). This is a great opportunity for new employees to get to know their new colleagues and workplace. In workplaces, a mihi whakatau is more common and can include kōrero (speeches), waiata (songs) and karakia. The order of proceedings varies, so please check with the local iwi, hapū (sub-tribe) or marae beforehand on the Te Puni Kōkiri Te Kāhui Māngai website. You can also learn more about pōwhiri on the Te Ara - NZ Encyclopedia website.
- **Mourning practices:** Tangihanga, the practice of mourning the passing of a loved one, typically takes priority over all other events in te ao Māori. It recognises the impact of the individual and supports whānau through the mourning process. Tangihanga are similar to funerals, but are typically longer in length. You can learn more about the tangihanga process on the Te Ara - NZ Encyclopedia website. For more information about leave entitlements please see our website or the Employment NZ website.



Helpful hints:

- **Varied connections to land:** Mātāwaka is a term known for Māori who live away from their traditional lands. Mana whenua are those who live on their ancestral lands. Both are examples of the experiences of Māori connection to the land, which may vary.
- **Use of te reo Māori:** While the use of te reo Māori is becoming more common across Aotearoa New Zealand, not all Māori employees may feel confidence speaking their language.
- **Expectations:** Don't assume your employees can be cultural advisors without discussing it with them. Appropriate remuneration may be needed if you're asking staff to take on additional cultural responsibilities.
- **Diversity in Māori Culture:** Māori culture is diverse, with many differences from language dialect to practices. Understanding this diversity is crucial as it is a common misconception that the aspirations, needs and ways of doing things are the same across all Māori communities.

Simple things you can do based on good practice

The MPI Good Employer Award recognises employers in the food and fibre sector that go the extra mile for their employees. Tree Machine Services LTD won the 'Māori Agribusiness Award', an award that celebrates Māori agribusinesses who deliver good employment practices. Tree Machine Ltd demonstrated several practices that could be helpful to implement in your workplace outlined below.

Investment in Rangatahi (younger generations)

Tree Machine Ltd focused on investing in their young (17- 30) workforce, helping them gain qualifications to build their careers.

What this could look like in your workplace:

- **Supporting Training:** Help your employees to achieve certification, through supported training providers, more can be found on our website.
- **Basic Qualifications:** Support employees in attaining basic qualifications such as a full drivers licence or first aid certificate. Find out more on our website about how to do this.
- **Mentoring and Coaching:** Refer to chapter 4, Mentoring and Coaching to see how you can support younger employees.

Lead with values

Tree Machine Services LTD operations are guided by values of manaakitanga, mana motuhake (independence), kotahitanga (unity), and tautoko (support).

What this could look like in your workplace:

- **Understanding key concepts:** Familiarise yourself some of the key concepts of te ao Māori, such as te reo and tikanga Māori.

- **Getting to know employees:** Learn more about who your employees are outside of work and understand how work may impact their lives, and vice versa. It is important to respect that not everyone may want to engage in these discussions, and that is okay. Encourage participants, but understand that not everyone will be willing to share more than that they are comfortable with. Some suggested questions could be:

- | How do you like to spend your time outside of work? Are there any hobbies or activities you are passionate about?
- | Is there anything that's been particularly challenging or rewarding recently in your life?
- | Is there anything we can do to support your work-life balance?

Whanaungatanga in action

A strong sense of family connection is reflected in team bonding events and shared responsibilities among staff at Tree Machine Ltd.

What this could look like in your workplace:

- **Team bonding:** Consider implementing small te ao Māori practices into your everyday work, such as karakia. Be sure to ask your employees what they would like to see.

Prioritising health and wellbeing

Offering support for workers facing personal struggles, such as issues with transport, is a priority for Tree Machine Ltd.

What this could look like in your workplace:

- **Regular check-ins:** Consistently check in with your employees to support their wellbeing. Refer to chapter 3, Workplace Wellbeing and Culture.

Kaitiakitanga in action

Tree Machine Ltd is heavily involved in environmental work, such as riparian planting, pest management, and track maintenance in partnership with regional councils.

What this could look like in your workplace:

- **Implementing Kaitiakitanga Practices:** Adopt relevant kaitiakitanga practices that are relevant to your workplace. See more information on our website.



Glossary

Term	Definition
Aotearoa	Land of the long white cloud (New Zealand)
Te ao Māori	The Māori world
Mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge systems
Kaitiakitanga	Guardian / stewardship
Taiao	Environment
Te reo Māori	The Māori language
Tikanga	Customs and practices
Whakapapa	Genealogy
Rāhui	To put in place a temporary ritual prohibition
Mauri	Life force
Whanaungatanga	Kinship and Relationships
Pepeha	Type of introduction
Whānau	Family
Mahi	Work
Manaakitanga	Caring and respecting others
Karakia	Incantations
Maramataka	Māori Lunar calendar
Matariki	Star cluster - often associated with the Māori new year
Kia ora	Hello
Iwi	Tribe
Hui	Meeting
Pōwhiri	Welcoming ceremony
Kōrero	Speeches
Waiata	Songs
Hapū	Sub-tribe
Tangihanga	Mourning
Mātāwaka	Kinship group
Mana motuhake	Independence, self-determination
Kotahitanga	Unity
Tautoko	Support

3

Workplace Wellbeing and Culture



Workplace Wellbeing and Culture

How can I create a positive environment that boosts job satisfaction?

Creating a happy and healthy workplace is important to ensure the job satisfaction of your employees. When our employees feel good and the work culture is positive, everyone benefits. A supportive and friendly workplace doesn't just increase job satisfaction—it also boosts productivity and keeps your team motivated and committed. Good workplace wellbeing and culture includes multiple factors.

We explore overall workplace wellbeing here, but for more information on mental, physical, cultural and social wellbeing see our website.

Important tools you can use to improve wellbeing, particularly of new and younger employees are explored too. These are:

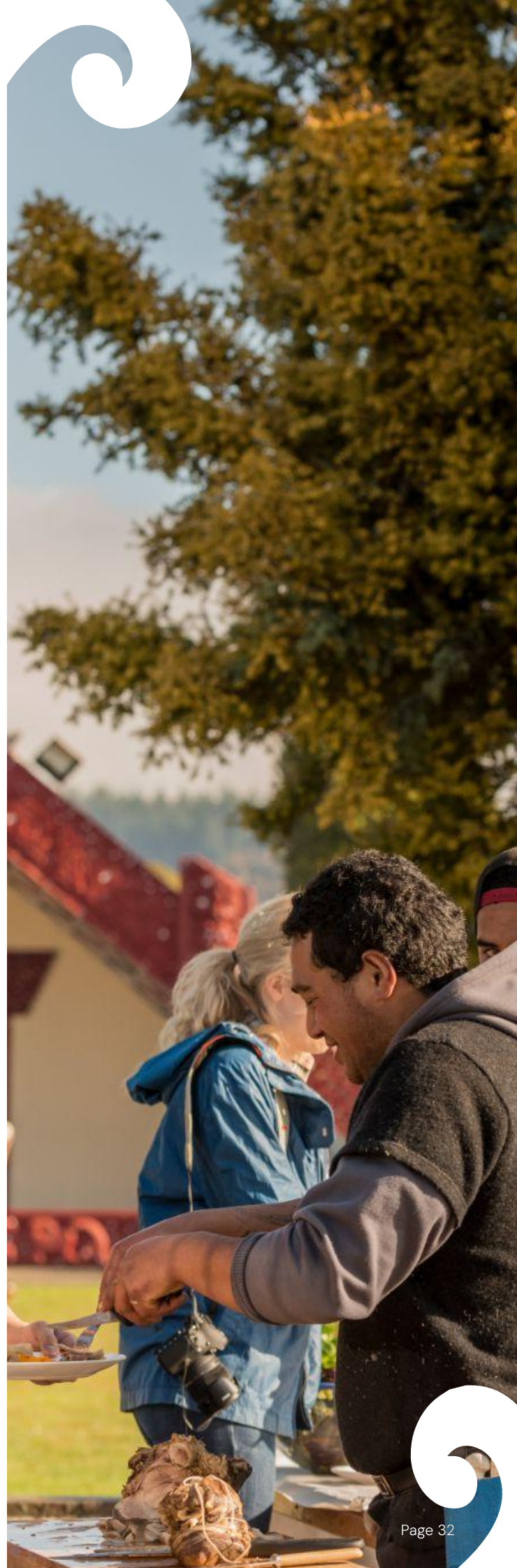
- Tool #1: Communications
- Tool #2: Buddy systems.



What is workplace wellbeing and culture and why does it matter?

Wellbeing includes different parts of a person's life that affect their overall health and happiness. This means that things happening outside of work can greatly affect how employees feel and perform at work.

By the end of this chapter, you'll have practical tips to help create a place where your employees feel satisfied in their role, supported, and ready to do their best.



Workplace Wellbeing (Workplace Culture)

Creating a positive workplace culture can set a business up for success. A positive culture not only attracts and retains skilled workers but also boosts productivity and job satisfaction. Workplace culture is the shared values, beliefs, and behaviours that shape how people interact and work together. It's about creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and motivated to contribute their best.



Tip Different people value different things in a workplace – make sure to have a conversation with team members about how to develop the culture in a way that suits them.

When building your workplace culture, see below some principles to keep in mind.

1. **Inclusivity and respect:** Create an environment where everyone can feel included and respected. Recognise and celebrate different backgrounds and perspectives.
2. **Communication:** Encourage open and honest communication. Make it easy for team members to share ideas, feedback, and concerns.
3. **Shared values:** Clearly define and communicate the core values that guide your business. Ensure these values are reflected in everyday actions and decisions.
4. **Employee wellbeing:** Give importance to wellbeing factors from outside of the workplace: the physical and mental wellbeing of your team. Provide resources and support to help them do well both at work and in their personal lives.
5. **Recognition and reward:** Acknowledge and appreciate the hard work and achievements of your employees. Celebrate successes, both big and small through activities such as morning teas, and employee of the month awards.

What does good workplace culture and wellbeing involve?

Building a positive workplace culture

Acting in good faith is an important concept all employers should follow. Acting in good faith means to be holding up principles of honesty, communication, and transparency. More information on good faith can be found on our website and on the Employment NZ website. Beyond meeting these legal requirements, employers can take additional steps to create a positive workplace culture. By putting in effort to go above and beyond the legal requirements, you'll have an environment where employees feel more valued and supported. This will help reduce the likelihood of them leaving for reasons within your control.

The workforce demographic is changing fast, with younger generations preferring flexible learning and working environments, as well as having a say in their work processes. Here are some tips and tricks employers can implement to meet these evolving expectations.

What are some practical steps I can take to support workplace wellbeing and culture?

Have you considered how you are supporting employees to improve their wellbeing? Run through these steps to figure out what you can do to go the extra mile. See more tips for improving each of the five key components of wellbeing are below.

Workplace culture

- **Assess workplace culture:** Start by asking your employees what they believe makes a good workplace culture. Understanding their perspectives can help you tailor initiatives that resonate with your team. Consider how elements of te ao Māori can enhance the workplace culture, see chapter 2, Māori Cultural Confidence for more information.

- **Foster a positive environment:** Create a workplace atmosphere that is supportive, respectful, and positive. Encourage teamwork and collaboration, and address any issues of conflict quickly and effectively.

2. Mental wellbeing

- **Put on your lifejacket first:** Ensure you are looking after your own mental health, as leadership sets the tone for the entire organisation.
- **Look out for others:** Get to know how your staff view mental health, it may look different to different people. Encourage your staff to prioritise their mental health as well. Consider enrolling in a Mental Health First Aid course to better support your team.

3. Physical wellbeing

- **Health and safety obligations:** Ensure you are complying with Worksafe NZ's website for health and safety guidelines. You can find these on their website, including food and fibre specific information. Searching their website to find industry or sector specific information which fits your business will provide the most helpful and accurate information on how to manage health and safety.
- **Enhance physical wellbeing:** Think about ways you can go above and beyond minimum health and safety requirements to prevent burnout or injury.

4. Cultural wellbeing

- **Celebrate cultural diversity:** Get to know your employees' cultural backgrounds and encourage them to share aspects of their culture with colleagues. This creates a more inclusive environment with meaningful workplace interactions.

5. Social wellbeing

- **Strengthen social bonds:** Host social events, such as an end of year work-do to help your team connect and unwind.
- **Connect over hobbies:** Encourage employees to join clubs or collectives to build camaraderie and a sense of community.

See the communications and buddy system sections below for steps on how to plan or implement best practices.

What are some tools I can use to build a good workplace culture?

Here are some practical tools and resources to help you build and maintain a strong workplace culture.

1. **Team-building activities:** Organise team-building activities to strengthen relationships and foster a sense of community. These can range from informal social gatherings to structured meetings.
2. **Mentorship / Buddy programmes:** Introduce mentorship (see chapter 4, Mentorship and Coaching) or the buddy system section below to provide support and guidance for new and existing employees. This helps build a culture of continuous learning and development.
3. **Communication platforms:** Use formal and informal social channels to facilitate easy and open communication among team members.
4. **Wellbeing initiatives:** Offer resources such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), workshops on stress management, or create time for the team to do some stretching at the start of a shift for ten minutes.
5. **Surveys and feedback tools:** Use regular surveys and feedback tools to review employee satisfaction and collect insights on areas for improvement (more on this in the communication section).



What does good workplace culture look like in reality?

Building a strong workplace culture involves consistent, everyday actions. Here are some examples of what it may involve on a day to day basis.



Daily check-ins: Start each shift with a brief team check-in to share updates, celebrate wins, and address any challenges. This keeps everyone connected and aligned.



Open-door policy: Encourage leaders to maintain an open-door policy, making it easy for employees to approach them with questions or concerns as they may arise.



Regular recognition: Implement regular recognition programs, such as Employee of the Month, to highlight and reward outstanding contributions.



Professional development: Offer ongoing opportunities to help employees grow their skills and advance their careers. More information is available on our website.



Inclusive practices: Ensure all team activities, meetings, and communications are inclusive, considering different needs and preferences.

Tool #1: Communications

Getting your messages across

Whether you're managing production, or working with distributors, clear and effective communication ensures that everyone is on the same page, working towards the same goals. Simply put, good communication helps people do their jobs better and makes workplaces more satisfied and productive.

Good communications helps you maximise the impact of your policies and processes (see our website or the Employment NZ website for more information). Whether it's something compliance related that protects you as an employer, or some guidance that will improve an employee's work experience, people need to know what you expect of them so they can act accordingly.

Employees want their employers to listen to them, and most importantly to take action. Two out of three employees feel their voice is not listened to in some way by their manager or employer, which may have a negative impact on turnover ⁶.

The costs of bad communication are:

- People make avoidable mistakes, and need to re-do jobs – wasting their time (and your money)
- Delays occur and deadlines are missed
- Managers can't lead their teams well, when they don't understand what is expected of them and their teams
- A lack of buy-in or understanding around change
- People are afraid to ask for feedback, which stunts personal and professional growth.

What should I keep in mind when thinking about communicating with employees?

1. **Clarity:** Make sure your messages are clear and easy to understand. Avoid using complicated words or industry jargon.
2. **Consistency:** Keep your communication consistent. This helps avoid confusion and ensures everyone knows what to expect.
3. **Listening:** Communication is a two-way street. Make sure you're not just talking, but also listening to what others have to say. Show that you value your employees' input by asking for their perspective too. Acknowledge their concerns and work together to find a solution.
4. **Respect:** Always communicate with respect. Treat others the way you want to be treated. Try to avoid raising your voice.
5. **Timeliness:** Share information in a timely manner. Don't wait until the last minute to communicate important updates. Make sure your audience has enough time to read and respond if needed.

Remember everyone is at a different stage in their career. What is second nature to experienced farmers, growers, foresters, and fishers may not be for everyone on the team. A task that may seem simple to you might not be for someone else. When the pressure is on, it's easy to forget that. Be thoughtful of others and their skill level and ability.

Note: Reading and Maths

Everyone is at a different stage in their journey reading, writing and doing sums. Some people are not confident in reading and doing maths. Adjusting your communications to meet the needs of your employees will ensure the best outcome.

⁶ UKG (2021) <https://www.ukg.com/blog/workforce-institute/new-research-the-heard-and-the-heard-nots>

What does good communication look like in reality?

Have a range of formal AND informal communication channels that allow communication from you to employees, and employees to you.

Formal

- Pulse surveys – to check in on wellbeing*
- Videos
- Scheduled 1:1 meetings
- Exit interviews
- Regular performance check-ins

- All hands staff meetings / Daily / Weekly huddles
- team meetings
- Noticeboard messages

- Unscheduled one on one meetings
- Open Door Policy: Encourage an open-door policy where team members feel comfortable approaching you with their questions or concerns.

InFormal

- Whatsapp / group messages / text chain
- Direct text / message
- Posters

Some questions to ask could include:

1. How are you feeling at work recently?

Multi-choice response options: Very Happy, Happy, Neutral, Unhappy, Very Unhappy

2. Do you feel supported by your team and manager?

Multi-choice response options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

3. Is there anything we can do to improve your wellbeing at work?

Open-ended response

These questions can help you gauge overall mood, the level of support employees feel, and gather specific suggestions for improvement.



Tool #2: Buddy systems

Supporting your employees from day one

Using a buddy system is a simple and effective way to support new employees as they settle into their roles during their first few weeks or months. A buddy system involves pairing an experienced employee (the "buddy") with a newcomer. The role of a buddy includes answering questions, introducing the new team member to others, and sharing tips on workplace practices to help them settle in. On an ongoing basis, a buddy can be someone who provides support to raise personal or professional issues.

By pairing them with an experienced colleague, you can help them feel welcomed, get trained up, and feel like a part of the team from day one. This approach can boost morale, improve retention, and boost overall productivity.

This system works best for people who are new to the business, particularly for younger workers or those making a career change. A good buddy would be a trusted person that has been in the new person's role before (typically two to five years further in their career).

Buddy system benefits

- Improves your onboarding process
- Faster integration into your culture
- Improved learning and development
- Ongoing support and identification of issues
- Increases the likelihood of new hires staying on

What should I keep in mind when setting up a buddy system?

- **Clarity:** Ensure both the buddy and the new employee understand the purpose and expectations of the buddy system. Have an agreed timeframe for the formal buddy relationship.
- **Compatibility:** Pair buddies who will work well together and have compatible personalities, workstyles and work in the same area.
- **Support:** Provide buddies with the tools and resources they need to be effective mentors.
- **Flexibility:** Be open to feedback and willing to adjust the buddy system as needed.



How can I support buddies to succeed?

Training Materials: Here is a guide you can use outlining how to be an effective buddy.

My role as a buddy

1. To welcome your new workmate and help them settle in as smoothly as possible.
2. To create a memorable and positive experience for your new workmate.
3. To get them up to speed with the basics of getting around as soon as possible.



Principles for buddies

Be approachable and responsive

Make sure your new workmate knows they can come to you with any questions or concerns.

Be inclusive

Make sure to include your new workmate in team activities and events, and help them feel like a part of the team.

Be patient and understanding

Remember that starting a new job can be overwhelming, and be patient with your new workmate as they adjust to their new role.

Encourage and praise

If they've done a good job, say it. Make sure to encourage your new colleague when they do well.

Be a mentor

Share your experience and knowledge, and help your new workmate grow in their role.

Be a friend

Building a positive relationship with your new workmate makes their transition more enjoyable and will be beneficial for both of you.

Buddy system checklist: A list of tasks and topics for buddies to cover with newcomers.

Day one	Week one	Week two – four
<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Meet new joiner, give them a tour, including toilets, kitchen, lockers.□ Help them navigate any administrative processes.□ Show them where to get tea/coffee/eat lunch.□ Introduce the new joiner to other team members.□ Invite the new joiner to have lunch with you.□ Provide a brief overview of the business culture, values so they know what to expect.□ Share a bit about your personal experiences and insights about working at the business / in the industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ If possible, coordinate shifts on the same days / times as the new joiner so you can be a familiar face.□ Set up informal check-ins.□ Provide an overview of the new joiner's team: other team members, roles, and responsibilities.□ Have the new joiner shadow you to get the hang of new tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Be available for spur of the moment questions.□ Continue to introduce the new joiner to other team members.□ Provide the new joiner with resources and materials to support their learning and development, such as training manuals or best practice advice.

What's my role in a buddy system as an employer?



Trainer:

Ensure buddies know their role as a buddy and are supported with training materials and a buddy checklist.



Introductions:

On the new employee's first day, introduce them to their buddy. From there, the buddy can give them a tour, introduce them to colleagues, and help them get set up.



Escalation:

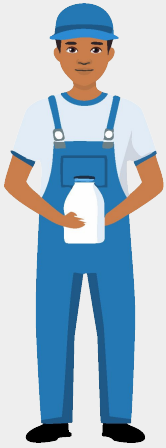
Be available for support when issues or questions arise that need to be escalated beyond buddy assistance.



Feedback:

Ask the new joiner and buddy how the system is working and use feedback to improve the process.

What does this look like in real life?



Sam is the newest worker at the dairy farm he has just joined as a milker. He got hired recently to help with the busy season – the team is currently in the midst of calving. Clocking long days and early starts in the midst of winter is starting to take a toll on Sam, throwing off his normal positive attitude.

The challenge

Working on a dairy farm can be tough and often lonely work. Early morning shifts mean that he doesn't get to see his friends often in the evenings, as he has to go to bed early.

Sam is **learning how to do new tasks**, and learning how to manage his time efficiently.

When Sam joined, **most of the team was very busy** and feeling stressed – which was not very approachable.

Buddy support response

The buddy system means **Sam has a mate to share the load with** and someone who looks out for him on the job. His buddy shares tips for shift work.

At the end of the day, **Sam and his buddy have a regular check-in.** They talk about what they accomplished, plan for the next day, and make sure neither of them is feeling overwhelmed. If one of them is, they discuss ways to adjust the workload, prioritise jobs, or find additional support.

The owner of the farm temporarily decreased the workload for Sam's buddy so that he had enough time to support Sam. Having a go-to person to ask questions was helpful, and Sam didn't feel like a bother asking questions because his buddy made it clear that he had time, and was there to help Sam get settled into his daily tasks. He could shadow his buddy to learn how to do tasks.

Where do you sit in workplace wellbeing?

Examples of bringing together the elements of Workplace wellbeing

Below are examples of three different employers who are at different stages of creating positive workplace culture through the different aspects (mental, physical, cultural, social wellbeing).

Case Study 1 – Needs Addressing

Jake, an employer at a mid-sized orchard, makes no efforts to create a healthier and more supportive work environment. This leads to employees burning out, getting injured, and feeling unsatisfied at work, and eventually leaving the business.

A few of Jake's employees have been struggling with several issues outside of work that have impacted their overall wellbeing and productivity.

There are several areas that Jake is neglecting that could be quick, low-effort fixes.

Mental Wellbeing:

- × Employees have been feeling increasingly stressed and anxious due to the demanding nature of their work. There is no support at work and people feel uncomfortable bringing up mental health support.

Cultural wellbeing:

- × Employees from diverse backgrounds do not feel fully included or understood. They feel like they have to hide a part of their identity at work to fit in. Recognising and celebrating cultural events and traditions, such as Matariki, could foster a more inclusive environment.

Physical wellbeing:

- × The team has not received proper training on safe working practices, resulting in frequent injuries and fatigue. Improving health and safety training is essential to protect employees' physical wellbeing.

Social wellbeing:

- × Employees feel isolated as they haven't formed strong connections with their colleagues. The rural orchard site doesn't help, as the social scene is limited.
- × There is a lack of social activities and team-building exercises that foster strong relationships among staff. Creating opportunities for social interaction and team bonding is necessary.
- × Jake doesn't encourage staff to get connected with their local communities in clubs or collectives.

Communications

- × **Lack of team meetings:** The orchard does not have regular team meetings or briefings to ensure everyone understands their tasks, so employees often receive unclear or incomplete instructions, leading to confusion and mistakes.
- × **Weak feedback culture:** Employees rarely receive feedback on their performance, making it hard for them to improve. Without regular check-ins or performance reviews, employees don't know if they're meeting expectations or how they can develop their skills. Implementing a feedback system is essential for employee growth and morale.
- × **No Open-Door Policy:** Employees don't feel comfortable approaching Jake with concerns – he is always perceived as too busy, and not very friendly or easy to start a conversation with.

The lack of an open-door policy means employees' ideas and issues often go unheard, adding to their stress and frustration. Creating a more open and approachable environment where employees feel comfortable sharing their concerns is important.



Case Study 1 – Needs Addressing

Buddy system

- ✗ **Lack of Guidance or process:** New hires do not have a designated person to guide them through the initial days. Without a buddy, new hires feel lost and overwhelmed, struggling to learn the ropes on their own. A buddy system would provide much-needed support and guidance.
- ✗ **No Hands-On Training:** New employees do not receive practical training during their induction. The absence of something like a buddy system means new hires miss out on hands-on learning from experienced colleagues, leading to slower skill development and more mistakes. Hands-on training is vital for new hires to learn effectively.
- ✗ **Poor Social Integration:** New hires find it hard to integrate socially with the team. New joiners are somewhat left to figure out the ropes themselves. This means new joiners may feel disconnected for a longer period of time.

Case Study 2 – Doing Well

Maisie, the owner and manager of a mid-sized pork farm, has made significant strides in noticing issues in the workplace culture, and making changes to support employee wellbeing.

Her efforts have resulted in a more supportive and productive work environment. There is still room for improvement, using tools like communications and buddy systems to get the most out of the culture-building initiatives that are in place. This makes the team more productive and increases job satisfaction.

Mental Wellbeing:

- ✓ Maisie understands that rural based farmers are at increased risks of mental health issues due to the geographic isolation, small work teams, and the social stigma amongst farmers about mental health challenges.
- ✓ She puts mental health resources in the breakroom and encourages open conversations about mental health.

Cultural wellbeing:

- ✓ Maisie talks to her team about their cultural backgrounds, and makes an effort to acknowledge and sometimes celebrate relevant cultural events, such as Matariki or Diwali. This helps create an environment where employees feel respected and valued, albeit on a somewhat limited scale.

Physical wellbeing:

- ✓ Regular health and safety training is conducted to keep everyone safe while conducting day to day tasks, and comply with Worksafe requirements.

Social wellbeing:

- ✓ Maisie organises a weekly morning tea where all employees chat and connect.
- ✓ Maisie encourages all staff to connect in with the local catchment group.

Communications

- ✓ **Morning check in:** The farm has a start of shift team huddle to talk through what needs to get done each day, and everyone shares a high and a low from the day before.
- ✓ **Two way radios:** The station uses two-way radios for real-time communication. Every worker has a radio, and they can talk to each other quickly for both routine work and emergencies. This makes the farm safer and more efficient.
- ✓ **Open-Door Policy:** Maisie encourages team members to share their thoughts and concerns anytime. Employees feel comfortable talking to Maisie, and are not scared to ask questions, knowing they will be heard and respected. This builds trust and a positive work culture.



Case Study 2 – Doing Well

Buddy system

- ✓ **Warm Welcome:** New hires are paired with experienced buddies who greet them on their first day. The buddy meets the new joiner at the farm gate, introduces them to the team, and shows them around the station, including key areas like the barn, paddocks, and emergency exits.
- ✓ **Hands-On Training:** The buddy provides practical training to the new employee. New hires shadow their buddies for the first few weeks, learning essential tasks such as animal care, machinery operation, and maintenance. This hands-on approach helps them gain confidence and skills quickly.
- ✓ **Social Inclusion:** The buddy invites the new employee to join any social events, which happen occasionally.

Case Study 3 – Excelling

Liam is owner and station manager of a rural sheep station.

Liam's workplace is a great example of how good communication, a supportive buddy system, and a focus on wellbeing can create a positive and productive work environment.

By going the extra mile, Liam has built a culture where employees feel valued, safe, and motivated, leading to improved productivity and reduced staff turnover.

Mental Wellbeing:

- ✓ Liam provides access to counselling services and mental health resources. He also organises mindfulness workshops and encourages the team to discuss mental health openly.
- ✓ Liam regularly acknowledges hard work and celebrates team successes. He also encourages a healthy work-life balance, making sure everyone takes breaks and has time off.

Cultural wellbeing:

- ✓ Liam encourages the team to celebrate cultural events and traditions. He ensures that everyone feels included and respected, regardless of their background.

Physical wellbeing:

- ✓ Regular health and safety training is conducted to keep everyone safe.
- ✓ Liam arranges for experts to run workshops on topics like first aid, handling livestock safely, and using machinery. This proactive approach reduces accidents and ensures a safe working environment.

Social wellbeing:

- ✓ Liam set up a monthly mountain bike club – employees that are interested ride together on Friday evenings.
- ✓ Liam encourages staff to always be learning and improving, including asking for feedback regularly. He encourages managers to also create spaces where team members can come to them with feedback, or asking for feedback.

Case Study 3 – Excelling

Communications

- ✓ **Morning check in:** Liam starts the day with a brief ten minute team huddle at the main shed. Everyone talks about the day's tasks, any concerns, and shares positive news. This helps everyone know what's happening and where they can pitch in.
- ✓ **Two way radios:** The station uses two-way radios for real-time communication. Every worker has a radio, and they can talk to each other quickly for both routine work and emergencies. This makes the farm safer and more efficient.
- ✓ **Open-Door Policy:** Liam encourages team members to share their thoughts and concerns anytime. Employees feel comfortable talking to Liam, and are not scared to ask questions, knowing they will be heard and respected. This builds trust and a positive work culture.
- ✓ **Monthly Newsletters:** Liam sends out a monthly email newsletter to all employees. The newsletter includes updates on farm activities, employee achievements and celebrations (like birthdays), upcoming events in the local community, and safety reminders. It's a simple way to keep everyone informed and engaged.

Buddy system

- ✓ **Intentional buddy selection:** Buddies are selected based on Liam's assessment of if they have similar hobbies, similar stage of their working career, and might get on well. Employees are happy to take up a buddy role because they know from experience how it helps you feel part of the team really quickly.
- ✓ **Warm Welcome:** New hires are paired with experienced buddies who greet them on their first day. The buddy meets the new joiner at the farm gate, introduces them to the team, and shows them around the station, including key areas like the barn, paddocks, and emergency exits.
- ✓ **Hands-On Training:** The buddy provides practical training to the new employee. New hires shadow their buddies for the first few weeks, learning essential tasks such as animal care, machinery operation, and maintenance. This hands-on approach helps them gain confidence and skills quickly.
- ✓ **Regular Check-Ins:** Buddies and new hires have regular check-ins to discuss progress and address any concerns. These check-ins happen during breaks or at the end of the day, fostering open communication and continuous support.
- ✓ **Social Inclusion:** As an employer, Liam fosters a sense of community on the station. Liam organises social events like BBQs and after-work gatherings, helping everyone bond. The buddy invites the new employee to join any social events, letting them know when and where they are happening.



4

Mentorship and Coaching



Mentorship and Coaching

How do I support employees in their growth journey?

Mentoring and coaching are vital tools in the employment relationship, particularly in the food and fibre sector.

- The relationship is between a more experienced person and a less experienced person, where guidance and support is given for the purpose of personal development.
- This relationship is mutually beneficial, with both parties free to ask questions and learn from each other.
- By fostering these connections, mentoring and coaching help to create a more satisfied workplace culture where everyone feels valued and encouraged to grow.

Mentoring and coaching can be an informal approach to training and development. For more details on informal training and development, see our website.

These methods also share similarities with a buddy system, which is discussed further in chapter 3, Workplace Wellbeing and Coaching.

What is the difference between a mentor and coach?

Below defines the 'classic' style of mentoring and coaching. It also outlines what role buddies play in the workplace.

Mentoring and coaching can be provided to someone by the same person but they take different views and approaches to achieve different objectives as outlined below. It is more common for mentors to be found outside of a workplace (external) than coaches. It will depend on the individual situation as to what set-up is most appropriate.

Mentor

What does it achieve

Focuses on long-term career development, goal setting, and personal growth through supporting someone's career journey usually across a medium-long period of time in an industry.

It focuses on career networks, sharing similar experiences, and providing guidance on longer-term career pathways.

Key activities

Mentors listen, share their insights, and help mentees navigate their career paths. They connect the mentee with resources including experiences or networks.

Who

Involves a more experienced person providing advice, guidance, and support to a less experienced team member. Often from outside of the organisation.

Pros

- Long term focus.
- Personal growth.
- May have infrequent check-ins.
- Can be as part of a formal programme.

Cons

- Time intensive.
- Can be unstructured.
- Mentee can sometimes have solutions given to them and not think through independently.



Coach	
What does it achieve Interactive process where the coach uses questioning and active listening to help the coachee find their own solutions and 'a-ha' moments. It focuses on improving specific skills, performance, and achieving short-term goals.	
Key activities Coaches guide individuals to set clear goals, develop action plans, and stay accountable.	Who Involves a senior person from within the organisation.
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular check-ins.• Structured approach.• Skill improvement.• Personalised feedback.• Frequent check-ins.• Encourages independent thinking and confidence.	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short term focus• Relies on coachee to work problems through for themselves

Buddy	
What does it achieve A buddy system is a simple and effective way to support new employees as they settle into their roles throughout their first few weeks or months on the job.	
Key activities Answers questions, introducing the new team member to others, and sharing tips on workplace practices to help them settle in.	Who Someone similar in age / work experience (two to five years).
Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides immediate support.• Eases transition into work.• Peer connection.	Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited in ability to support with some issues• Temporary• New employee may become over reliant, hindering their independence

Understanding tuakana and teina (Māori mentoring / coaching concept)

Learning is a shared journey, often involving many parties. This is no different in te ao Māori. The term *tuakana* can be understood as an older sibling, and *teina* can be understood as the younger sibling. In the context of mentoring and coaching, the relationship between tuakana and teina can be understood as a more senior experienced individual (tuakana) supporting a younger less experienced individual (teina) to learn and grow. In many cases this relationship can lead to mutual learning.

This gradual, mutual learning process is known as 'ako' in te ao Māori, and it includes the dual roles found in the tuakana-teina relationship. The aim is to help learners feel a sense of belonging in their learning environment and to provide any additional support they might need. This relationship goes both ways and is voluntary, with both parties learning from each other, rather than being driven by monetary value.

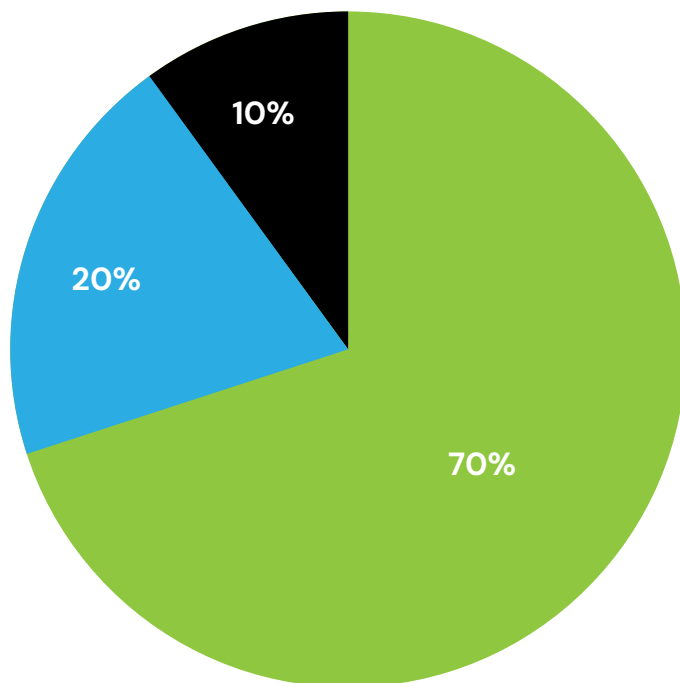
This dynamic is context specific, for example in your workplace the mentor may represent the tuakana and a new hire may represent the teina. But in a different situation this relationship may change. For example, in a cultural environment the new hire may actually be the tuakana, and the mentor may be the teina. This is something to be aware of.





How People Learn

The 70:20:10 rule provides a useful rule of thumb for understanding how people learn and develop:



Self-development

On the job experience



Guided development

Mentoring & coaching in the workplace / colleagues & friends



Structured development

Extracurricular training / course work



What is the value of mentoring and coaching?

Mentoring and coaching is important for the following reasons.

1. **Enhanced performance:** Mentoring and coaching improves employee performance by providing guidance, support, and feedback that they need.
2. **Increased retention:** When your employee feels supported and can see clear paths for growth they are more likely to stick around.
3. **Improved confidence:** Regular chats with mentors and coaches can boost confidence and people skills, leading to better decision-making and leadership.
4. **Creating a positive culture:** A culture of mentoring and coaching encourages teamwork, respect, and trust, making your workplace a more supportive and productive place.

What are the key elements to good mentoring and coaching?

1. **Set practical goals:** Help your mentee set achievable goals using a goal-setting framework and provide long-term career guidance to foster overall professional growth.
2. **Listen and understand:** Listen patiently to understand your mentee's aspirations and regularly check in on their well-being and mental health.
3. **Share experience and advice:** Offer your insights and advice, even if you're not an expert, to provide an outside perspective that can help with skill development and navigating work-related challenges.
4. **Recommend resources:** Suggest useful tasks, books, events, podcasts, and blogs to help your mentee develop and enhance their skills.
5. **Encourage independence and confidence:** Inspire your mentee to tackle challenging goals, respect their confidentiality, and ensure they feel a sense of independence while offering support when needed.





How can I support my employee to find the right mentor / coach?

There are three options to consider when supporting your employee to find the right mentor / coach.



Tip Usually coaches are within the business and can be the line-manager. Mentors may be external.

- Is there someone suitable within the business?
 - Is this person experienced and have they mentored or coached before?
 - What support do they need to be a good mentor / coach?
 - Do they have the capacity to mentor and/or coach?
- If someone internal is unavailable, is there someone in your community or network who:
 - Is this person experienced mentoring others in the industry?
 - Does their experience align with areas your employee is looking to develop?
 - Are they willing to take on a new mentee?

- If the above are not feasible, or another mentor/coach is required then:
 - Could you support your employee to become involved in a professional or organised programme to gain mentorship? Examples include:
 - NZ Young Farmers Regional Mentor Teams
 - Agri-Women's Development Trust Generation Change Mentoring
 - Rural Leaders Programmes and various industry body programmes
 - Could you encourage them to network in different forums (such as local workshops, meetings, and conferences) to find a mentor?
 - Could you encourage them to seek out individual professional business mentors and coaches (paid).



Tip Encourage your employee to find potential mentors through channels available to them. This could include through social groups, via social media on Facebook or LinkedIn, through industry body channels, or through networking at conferences.

What steps can I (or others) follow to coach and/or mentor employees?

Coaching and mentoring can both follow a simple process. A useful tool is the The GROW Model which can be found on the MindTools website. GROW is easy to remember as it stands for Goal, Reality, Options, and Way Forward. It helps coaches and mentors work through with their coachee / mentee a logical process and the right questions to ask at each stage.

Think of it like planning a journey:

1. first, help your coachee/mentee decide where they want to go (the goal),
2. second, help them explore where they are now (their current reality),

3. then, explore different ways to get to the goal together (the options),
4. finally, make sure they're committed and ready to handle any obstacles along the way (the way forward).

While the process can be the same for both coaching and mentoring, as explained previously, coaching will take a more short-term and enabling approach.

Mentoring, on the other hand, will take a longer-term, career-focused approach with more support given by the mentor.

Task	Questions to ask
<p>Create the Goal</p> <p>Ask your employee to create a SMART goal. SMART goals are a framework used to set clear, achievable objectives. The acronym stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your most important goals right now? • Why are these goals important to you?
<p>Look at your Reality</p> <p>Ask your employee to describe their present situation, this helps them to think about the solution to their problem/ goal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What challenges or opportunities are you facing right now? • What strengths do you bring to achieving these goals?
<p>Explore the Options</p> <p>Together, determine what is possible for reaching an objective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What obstacles or challenges are you currently facing? • What are you already doing to work towards your goal? • How have you successfully overcome similar challenges in the past?
<p>Establish the Will</p> <p>Ask your employee to commit to specific actions in order to move forward towards their goal, this helps to boost motivation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources or support do you need to succeed? • How will you measure your progress towards your goals? • What have you learned about yourself through this process? • What will you do to maintain and build on your progress in the future? • What specific actions will you take to move forward?

You can also see a Mentoring Programme rubric created by Food and Fibre CoVE which outlines a set of criteria to measure the level of vocational excellence achieved. It can be a helpful tool to see how you can improve your mentoring abilities.



What does good coaching and mentoring look like?

Below outlines two case studies for both mentoring and coaching. These highlight some of the common issues with coaching or mentoring and in contrast, the key good aspects of coaching and mentoring.

Mentor

Needs Addressing

- ✗ Jordan, a senior farmer, is mentoring Brooklyn, a new farm assistant. However, Jordan rarely finds time to meet with Brooklyn and often cancels their scheduled sessions.
- ✗ When they do meet, Jordan tends to dominate the conversation, offering advice that is not always relevant to Brooklyn's interests in livestock management.
- ✗ Brooklyn feels frustrated and unsupported, and is unsure about their future within the business.

Excelling

- Darcy, a senior manager with over 20 years of experience in viticulture, is mentoring Charlie, a contractor from overseas.
- ✓ Darcy regularly meets with Charlie to discuss their career goals and provides Charlie with valuable insights into the industry. Darcy helps Charlie set long-term career goals and offers advice on developing their skills.
 - ✓ Charlie feels supported and inspired, and has successfully navigated several challenging projects thanks to Darcy's guidance.

Coach

Needs Addressing

- ✓ Taylor, a coach, is working with Riley, a new employee on the orchard, on their time management skills.
- ✗ Taylor often provides generic advice without considering Riley's unique circumstances.
- ✗ Taylor doesn't follow up regularly, and Riley feels left to their own devices.
- ✗ As a result, Riley struggles to implement any meaningful changes, and their performance remains stagnant. Riley feels discouraged and doubts the effectiveness of the coaching process.

Excelling

- ✓ Alex, a skilled coach, is working with Jesse, a dairy farm manager, to improve their herd management skills.
- ✓ Alex schedules regular sessions with Jesse, where she uses active listening to understand Jesse's concerns and challenges.
- ✓ Alex guides Jack in setting specific, achievable goals, such as improving milk production and cow health, and helps develop a clear action plan.
- ✓ Alex provides constructive feedback and encourages Jesse, leading to noticeable improvements in herd wellbeing and productivity. Jesse feels more confident and capable in their role.

Endnote

Thank you for taking the time to read our toolkit and for helping to uplift employee retention in the food and fibre sector.

In each chapter, you will have found practical advice and tips to help you keep your employees satisfied and committed to your business. Our guidance can assist you in:

- Recruiting the right people from the start
- Embracing Māori culture and fostering a more inclusive and welcoming workplace
- Prioritising wellbeing and creating a positive work environment where employees feel valued and supported
- Effectively mentoring and coaching your workers to help them grow and succeed

By focusing on these key areas, we can create a workplace where everyone feels appreciated and motivated to do their best. Improving employee retention is not just a good idea—it is essential for the long-term success of your businesses and the overall health and productivity of our sector. Let's continue to invest in our workers and, in turn, secure a bright future for the food and fibre sector.



You can visit our website employertoolkitnz.org to find more information on:

- Understanding your obligations as an employer
- How to train and develop your people

