



Input to your Strategy for Adapting to Challenges

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Handling staff shortages

Last Friday I sent out a survey to the three-quarters of my 22,000 Tony's View subscribers who this month are not receiving the Business Survey request. The question I asked was this.

“NZ businesses are having record difficulties sourcing staff. What have you found to be effective in either recruiting people or retaining your people? Alternatively, how have you changed staff management and interaction to better handle shortages?”

Over 170 people sent in their thoughts and some of the offerings were excellent. I have reprinted here the majority of the responses, excluding those which simply said some version of “pay more” and leaving out those which repeated an already common theme.

My summary of the thoughts which people have offered is this.

1. Offer more flexible hours of work, not just the opportunity to work from home which is not possible in many businesses.
2. Create a strong team environment with spontaneous awards to reflect employee or

employee family achievements and milestones.

3. Offer part-time work to retain people who are retiring.
4. Outsource offshore where possible.
5. Don't low-ball initial pay offers as people facing choice will feel disrespected and you've lost a hiring opportunity even if you lift the offer.
6. Automate processes and boost efficiency in order to reduce reliance on staff.
7. Promote from within and make promotion path opportunities clear to new and existing staff.
8. Train people for higher-ranking positions.
9. Hire for potential, not immediate productivity.
10. Provide finders fees to staff who successfully introduce a new employee.

The discontent

Let's start with some of the discontent people have been expressing about the situation, mixed in with examples of the extent of the labour shortage.

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- We have hired 9 non-New Zealanders recently, which doubles our FTEs. We are paying less than \$25 an hour. Our jobs are more interesting than cleaning, concierge or barista. Additionally, we make long days with plenty of days off so the staff can ski and go off with their partners and mates. We are fortunate to be able to offer this, therefore hopeful that more holiday visa people will be on the first airplanes when the borders open. Hardly 1 application from a New Zealander for any of the 9 positions.
- I know of a firm which is considering closing its books (i.e., new business) to work for a while because they cannot source and/or replace staff. This is a firm in the land survey industry and many clients are wanting to carve off bits of land, sections, etc. to sell off. There is a shortage of staff in this industry, and at present there is a 6-month delay in getting their jobs done. The imposition of regulations and sledgehammers and other hysteria is wearing thin with the grey hair brigade who can no longer be bothered putting up with it all.
- We have had to go to WINZ to get help with training suitable staff for truck driving provided WINZ pay for the sitting of class 5 licences. Yet to hear back if they will so work in progress. Huge shortage of class 5 truck drivers. Hitting agricultural sector hard. Advertising has been waste of time and resorted to word of mouth. Created significant stress within our business.
- I'm in horticulture, and the Govt's current take on the RSE programme is devastating to our business and industry. We are lobbying them to relax some of the restrictions before the growing season gets underway. To find local labour (of which

there is not enough!) we are looking at potentially offering relocation stipends and seasonal accommodation for Kiwis.

- I'm in the construction industry. As everyone is stretched, they are making staff work weekends to try and catch up. Not making them work weekends is a real winner, even if they say they want some extra hours, they'll soon hate you for it. When hiring, I find potential candidates are surprised we don't work Saturdays.

The suggestions

- Let others go after expensive trained staff while you give opportunities to lift up the bottom staff who have an awesome attitude but are open to more upskilling and training. That way you get them cheaper.
- Make people feel part of the team and management.
- Build close relationships like remembering their birthdays and those of their kids and give the kids 10/20 dollars.
- Give the employee \$50 macs voucher every now and again it will be repaid 10-fold build loyalty to one business.

We have found that if you map out a career path for them in your team when you hire them, it focuses them on their growth while staying put.



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- People leave to pursue other opportunities and grow. We have found that if you map out a career path for them in your team when you hire them, it focuses them on their growth while staying put. It can be as simple as adding a 'Senior' to the front of their role following agreed outcomes. KPI's are great too, if you make them annual bonuses people will often stay until the end of each year to hit the target.
- Advertise differently. Try a completely different style of advertising for example move from a list of technical requirements to qualities and personal attributes. Name some of the varied backgrounds that someone might have.
- Improve efficiency - focus on work that really matters; automate what can be automated - help staff be more efficient.
- Push work out further - plan further ahead.
- Employee flexibility, working from home and business's culture remain high on the list of retention factors.

Try as best to restrict your forward workload to match your resources. The days of "secure that project and worry about resourcing it once you have it" are gone and is what is the real problem here.

- We must train new recruits as quickly as possible and retain the excellent staff we already have. We have set up a team teaching and training system in our business that we never had before. The new recruits train as a team, its faster and

they are more motivated. Feedback from industry trainers tells us this group approach is working very well and we feel the same way. The young people are getting the attention and acknowledgement they need be successful

We realised a few years back that expecting people to work for a wage alone just wasn't working well enough in our business.

- ...We needed to take a more holistic view of the employer - employee relationship and make some changes. We did lots of reading and embraced some uncomfortable new ideas
- We now provide a catered hot meal for all staff once a week and keep the staffroom fridge stocked with cereals, bread, fruit and snacks that you can eat any time of the day. We celebrate everything with a morning tea shout - birthdays, cold days, hot days, engagements, weddings, graduations, you name it. We sponsor your child's sports events and give generously to fundraising by our staff.
- We have a hero of the week that chooses the beverage for Fridays. Young people are encouraged to speak up and give us their feedback. We will be listening. As a result of these initiatives the culture in our business has been transformed to be one of greater inclusion, cooperation, support and fun. Performance levels have increased like never before. Yes, there is a cost involved in implementing these changes, however we have found the

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benefits both financial and by all other measures are far greater than the material cost and we plan to continue on this path.

- Thinking outside the box in terms of remuneration, not just salary increases, incentives for perf based activities, flexibility with working at home or offsite office location, fortnightly brainstorming and catch-up team discussions, investing in team resilience and soft skill training, supporting firm culture via team input and collaboration with partners/mgmt.
- Since 99% of offices are empty from 7pm at night to 6am in the morning, offer a graveyard shift that lifts NZs productivity and assists connectivity with the world. Why limit ourselves to working in the light?
- We have looked to automate a lot of our processes which allows us to employ less experienced staff who are overseen by more experienced team members. The mix has allowed us to bring in graduates and get them up to speed and be productive quite quickly. We've also tried to create a supportive and friendly environment that the team enjoy working in.

Think outside the square - new mums who are on maternity leave could work from home if there are jobs that can be passed on to them.

- ...Look at the work carried out by existing staff, and which can be moved around to such people within the business. Even consider those who have taken an early retirement to see if they want to do a few

hours from home, enjoy retirement and still make a little \$\$\$ on the side with good work life balance. Have had instances where jobs traditionally thought to be male centric can be done by women and from home. Its a matter of looking at the current workflow and JDs of your employees and see what can be moved around etc.

- Pastoral care from picking them up and taking them home, giving lunches, wet weather gear and boots. becoming more personal with them.
- Merge Job Descriptions into an overarching document and employ persons who can work in at least most of the areas given. This gives one multi-useful staffers and assists with Immigration applications.
- Treat people like family. Treat them with respect. Ask them for feedback regularly on how appreciated they feel in our team. We have a vision to have a workplace that people love to be part of and are proud to contribute to. We believe and have proved that people who feel this way will perform at a high level and create success for the whole team. Our people become ambassadors and we attract quality people who want to be a part of what we have. Its not easy, it has taken years to cultivate this.
- Allow more WFH - especially if your office is in Akl or Wlg CBD. Work to get your IM systems etc. up to scratch to allow this to happen. Be flexible on the time in office: i.e., does the team prefer set days in the office to all come together? Do they prefer to live way out of town and do week on/week off in the office? Structure these arrangements to fit the needs of the team (i.e., do you need collaborative work? are your team all introverts who prefer to work alone anyway? etc).



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- Always considering human factors (well being, belonging, balance) and technology together. By providing lots of flexi and WFH options, embracing a hybrid model and investing in more technology and training my team know how to use the technology available and that provides better outcomes - e.g., using Microsoft Teams for meetings, group chat and also to manage workflows, increases efficiencies, improves connection and communication. These things help my people to achieve balance in their lives, to have autonomy with accountability, to work well from anywhere and to remain connected it also ensures my business is adaptable and resilient to face our constantly shifting market.

Making the most of walk ins, turning applications into job offers within 24 hours.

- For most people it's not the money but how you treat them. Also, it's the small things. However, specifically; We hire young guys who have no money for tools (building game), so we purchase their tools and give them an interest free loan, they pay back \$50 per week. Never let me down yet. -We also hand deliver a small gift voucher, \$40, on each guy's birthday, handshake, etc. -We address their issues early, return calls straight away, always listen even if we can't do anything. -We keep an ear to the ground. If we hear someone's unhappy for whatever reason, we jump on it and find out the reason why.

-Lots of basic, small things but that's what counts. The dollars as a rule are similar so it's not always about that.

- Fortunately, our industry has set up a trainee scheme...; www.roadtosuccess.nz
- We advertise as a "Wellbeing Employer" (we may have also created that title) so that we can brag about sick leave starting on day 1, and extra 5 days sick leave a year, bereavement / tangihanga leave minimums of 5 days per (rather than normal 3), lots of EAP (employee assistance programme), flexible working arrangements, and our everyone-on-full-pay-no-leave-taken response to C19 lockdown.
- We've had to increase our wage/ salary rates considerably in an effort to fend off growing demand for staff in our industry.

Already recruitment companies are approaching our staff offering them double the wage rate if they go to Australia.

- Modernising our employment contracts beyond the standard required by law, things like birthday leave; considering employee share schemes; making sure remuneration levels were commensurate with the market; removing at risk pay and rolling it into base while maintaining strong KPI frameworks for achieving personal and business goals.
- While working in a hotel industry and Managing a Hotel, I started to employ year 13 high school students who were looking for work in all areas of the Hotel. Even

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though you had to invest time training it saved the business in the longer term as they were willing to do 2-4 hour shifts in the evenings or weekends when others were not so keen. Once trained up you had additional staff in the Summer Holidays when the Hotel was busier. I definitely think this is the way forward as well as paying extra for great staff as the output you get from them is so much more and worth keeping on. Too many times people were not given a chance as they had no work experience but what you really need is a great attitude foremost.

- Staffing is dire currently, and without the migration inflows it will continue to be. We started bundling accommodation into employment contracts so the company shareholders and directors partnering with colleagues with capital, to purchase houses, which enables us to recruit and retain the best staff. We also provision these houses with internet from our IT guy, paying internet and power and cell phone bills, and subsidising their rent heavily, to ensure this stress is taken off our employees' plates. This is proving hugely successful.
- Having worked in HR for more than 30 years now, I would recommend reaching out to your network and phoning people to see who they know. LinkedIn also works well if you are looking for corporate souls. A friend of mine who is a recruiter, has been beside herself trying to find candidates - she set up a referral scheme with a cash prize of \$500 for a candidate that stays the course. Remember to review your remuneration offering - your \$ might be too low. Also think about dropping your experience/skills expectations as you'll be attractive as an employer if you offer a more complex job with on-the-job training and opportunities to advance. Finally, think about your workplace culture - why do people leave your organisation and what are you doing to fix that?
- The only effective way has been to increase the contract. E.g. we normally

pay \$38/bin (fruit picking). We've been offering \$50/bin to entice workers. Seems to help.

We are constantly asking our existing staff if they know of anyone, and we reward them with generous referral fees for securing good staff.

- ...We also try to retain our existing staff by offering thank you gifts for their hard work (gift vouchers etc), and extra days paid leave for celebrations etc. Its currently a battle to retain good staff, and secure good staff, as prior to Covid, we recruited probably 50% of our staff (engineering co) from overseas. There is a lot of shoulder-tapping going on.
- LinkedIn has been an amazing tool to reach out to passive candidates as a recruitment coordinator - being able to speak with people who aren't actively looking or are too busy to put themselves out there in the market. The team here are doing their best to work with hiring managers and put a bit of hustle in the hiring process so that they don't miss out on top talent for their roles.
- We are in Trades business and generally whilst very hard to find qualified tradesmen we don't have too many problems even with the current spike in workload. Simple reason being we have had a long-held view that hiring and training apprentices is the only way we can get around the perennial problem of finding skilled staff on open market for the last 15 to 20 years.

Not looking forward to borders opening and young staff bolting to do the OE....

- Train up people within the team and upskill them, they will also show more loyalty as you helped them move up.
- Here in Wellington City, my small team used to catch public transport when coming into the office. That has become increasingly unreliable with bus services being cancelled mostly due to a lack of bus drivers and many other reasons. So, we have arranged parking at the company's expense for all team members who require it - having made sure we took tax advice first.
- Professional services team with one on parental leave again. Low number of applicants, and none suitable, despite advertising three times. Have resorted to outsourcing overseas, which has actually turned out to be great. More cost effective without the spiralling staff costs and regulation. Will likely be a permanent arrangement.
- Our business is open 5 1/2 days a week. We have offered various staff the option to work 2 half days on Saturday and then have the Friday off the 3rd week when they aren't working Saturday. They love getting a 3-day weekend approx. every 3 weeks.
- I am an independent contractor to a very well-known international chef and support him with all of his HR needs, a portion of which is recruitment. We are recruiting more or less every fortnight. I always find people. For standard roles we pay the market rates (\$22.50 for waiters so that's the living wage whereas some places are now paying \$25 for waiters, and we are an a la carte fine dining restaurant, \$20 for runners and glassies, \$21 for dishwashers, But \$26 for duty managers), either front or back of house. For more senior roles, we pay slightly above the market rate. What works best - having someone dedicated to finding people. You need to be responsive and small business owners have too much on their plate. Second - be flexible and ready to train. With the exception of chefs, FOH and steward roles are not highly skilled. Third - do staff referrals. Pay your staff say \$100 (whatever) for referring

someone - but pay it after the new person has been there for say 12 weeks. If the sum is large enough, it can also be tied into a retention payment for the referring person (i.e., they have to still be employed to get it). Fourth - use social media, yes, but also use social employment sources - such as older people. Fifth - be clear about what sets you apart. Career progression is it for us. By way of example waitresses who are now baristas (highly skilled job to do it at high volume and high quality) and we invested in their external training and promoted them when the opportunity came up. Stewards (dishwashers) who were studying are now demi-chefs. Waitresses who are now duty managers. CDP now sous chef. And that's all in 9 months.

Promote within for the hard-to-find roles and back fill the easy ones.

- I appreciate none of this is as easy as it sounds. That is why having someone dedicated is helpful.
- We have implemented a 4-day working week (10-hour shifts) and this is a point of difference (for now anyway). We rotate our teams to ensure we are well staffed 5 days a week. This affords them a 4-day weekend every 2nd working week.
- In the regions it's near impossible to get trained staff so we have resorted to employing school leavers and training them in the hope that we can retain them. Senior staff are having to work longer hours and haven't really been able to take holidays.
- Our solution, as an accounting firm, has been to establish our own outsourcing office in Rarotonga. Using the 4G Manatua internet cable to link the offices in the cloud. We employ local school leavers in Rarotonga and put them through Massey University extramurally so that they gain their accounting qualification. This is a win-win. We get staff other firms can no longer poach and we upskill the island

employees, socially conscious outsourcing. We will never employ another NZ graduate because recruitment firms simply poach them after 2 years when we have completed training them and they go to firms who can afford to pay more because they are not investing in training themselves. The net result in NZ is that there are insufficient graduates being trained, but that's now the economic reality, spawned by the rise of outsourcing.

- We have found an excellent source of labour in students.

Using Student Job Search we employ at no recruitment or advertising cost, smart students. We use these to pad out full time staff so that fewer full timers are needed.

- The disadvantage is they are mostly only available part time, but that's fine, employ more. They are also not long-term so you can't use them in key positions, although we usually get at least a year of smart motivated labour from them all, some have fitted well and moved to full time employment with us, at least half of our recent full-time employs came through this path.
- We are a business that is 85% female. Most are mothers and/or grandmothers. We are a factory with workstations and heavy pieces of plant bolted to the floor so people can not work from home. We offer flexibility around what they need to do with their family responsibilities. Some cannot work Monday, some only 9-3, some need to take their child to after school activities. Although this can be difficult to manage when we are busy it does create a loyalty from the team. In March 2021 we moved everyone to at least the living wage and will again follow up the Sept 21 movement in March 22.
- Recruitment is certainly difficult, but it has been that way in the engineering

consultancy business for some time. What has changed is that now instead of the difficulties being in hiring people with more than say 5 years experience, there are now also difficulties in hiring graduates fresh out of university. We have heard anecdotally that some firms are offering graduate engineers \$70k starting whereas the previous rate was 50-60k. We have found that putting more emphasis on the non-salary benefits, work atmosphere and actively trying to connect potential hires to the company during the recruitment process seems to be working.

- We have very successfully run recruitment open days for many of our clients, particularly for trades positions. In simple terms applicants just have to express interest (no CV required), they then all get invited to the "open day" (usually a couple of hours) where they do a series of practical tests to assess their attitude and aptitude. We have had a very strong success rate as there are minimal barriers to applying. I.e., if they don't have a CV, it is not an issue, they don't need one; if they don't like face to face interviews, not a problem, they don't need to do one.
- I have kept on staff who were to retire, for 3 days a week. They didn't want to retire but didn't want to work full time. Win-win. Also have a contractor that works here when he isn't busy. Usual a minimum of 4 to 5 days a fortnight to at times 3 to 4 days a week. Works for us.
- Rather than take on new staff we have used the covid situation /changes in employment law/staff shortages to review what we are good at, what we are not so good at and where our profits come. This has meant we have changed the way we do business, dropped some of our less profitable services, focussed where we can charge for value add. This has been a worthwhile review. We are now more profitable, although less turnover, eliminated the need for extra staff and in fact we are probably now overstaffed. We won't release anyone but if anyone decides to leave then we would not replace them.

I am now promoting more from within the organisation, on the basis of potential capability not proven capability. It's turning out to be a wonderful strategy.

- Be open minded to people that do not have experience but who are willing. Also, flexibility is key to opening up and enabling people such as young parents wanting to return to the workforce.
- Change the working day to school hours for the right candidates. There are heaps of very qualified stay at home parents desperate to use their skills but just can't do the 8-5pm workday. Give them 9-3pm and you'll likely find they are twice as productive with it as those on full time hours.
- Two friends of mine have businesses requiring regular customer contact. Much cheaper to pay \$30K for the software and Filipino call centre back-up than paying for staff. It's meant they can step away a bit and keep growing and improving the businesses.
- The hard work we have done to flatten our structure and give a culture of inclusion and backing team decisions is working well.
- In addition to the usual recognition, honest remuneration and support when required. I try and get my manual guys into some training. English, computers, managing money etc. They appreciate this and it is win/win for a lot of the guys who never had the opportunities others had when they were younger.
- Learn how to work with staff across borders. We have employed one staff from LA.
- Once we meet our business costs for the month we pay a bonus to our staff, plus ever year we raise our office fees \$1-2 and use the increased fees to increase frontline wages. We're able to retain staff much better than the rest of my profession and

as a business we have trusted and loyal staff which makes work very easy and its good for our end of year profitability.

- Recruiting - having a video showcasing the business with the team involved so prospects know what the business is like, and it gives insight to the working environment and the team. Holding a recruitment evening and having a panel from the business. Retention - concentrate on health and wellbeing we have run group gym sessions paid for by the company split into 2 sessions during work hours you will find that guys will run groups sessions at a reasonable price if you get numbers. Its so successful that we have continued to do this contributing to 1/2 the cost.
- For key staff we have offered a 9-day working fortnight. Same weekly hours compressed into 9-days providing a 3-day break. Went down well.
- Paying more. Bonus on turnover. Changed hours to suit team. Changed our opening hours to suit traffic. Productivity training, which means less effort and more engaged team.
- We are investing in AI and other forms of technology to automate as much as possible of the mundane and reserve the people for the tasks only people can carry out. This has two benefits - more cost effective for us, but work is more meaningful and interesting for the team. Reviewing our customer base, assessing margin earned, and exiting our relationships with a number of low margin customers. Asking the team what they want & value, and adjusting our employment offer to match. And continuing to work on engagement internally.
- We have a lot of specialist staff which have been incredibly hard to find and train. We're now taking the approach of process mapping what we do and pulling out any task big or small that isn't specialist so we can fill it with administrators and other non-specialist roles. Win-win as talented administrators will do a better job of those tasks and frees up time for the specialists.

- Having a good relationship with my local MSD Work Broker, to help me source local, often hidden talent - Being able to give someone an opportunity/chance through that channel.
 - I am a director of a 35+ person manufacturer in East Tamaki. Like almost everyone we struggle to find good reliable staff with the right attitude. Key ability to find and retain staff are in my opinion
 - 1 Earn their respect on the shop floor - we listen to them, show concern if issues at home etc. and ask their opinions on work matters. Also, we do not talk down or lecture or hassle. Have pizza lunch in canteens for milestone events and talk about "life".
 - 2 Have an unwritten HR policy that is understood and agreed - not publishable for "woke" reasons. Understand the shop floor and associated clerical staff are socially conservative.
 - 3 Pay good wages and don't thrash them on hours without their agreement and a clear goal in sight. They will work 70 to 80 hours per week to finish a contract over a number of months as long as they know they can have Christmas or some other solid holiday break - they like money but will not be bought.
 - 4 Take nothing for granted and be there if things get difficult e.g., materials not delivered, or orders changed suddenly.
 - In summary - get a good rep for the business and let word spread in the community that you are a good business to work for.
 - Have to focus on organisational culture, working environment and other benefits e.g., staff development, etc. However, especially for the younger staff members it is a pure dollar and cent exercise and unfortunately you have to meet the market or start afresh with training up more junior staff.
 - Creating ads that show a career path have proved the most successful in attracting the most applications.
 - We have found focusing on the 5 Ways to Wellbeing is having an impact on retention.
- Setting up small events or focusing on one initiative for a month so it's not too time consuming to arrange.
- Not great but we have ended up recruiting lesser skilled people with the hope of training them. Provided existing staff flexible working arrangements. Encouraged them to take more time off.
 - Have lowered the bar substantially, hiring people who would not have made the grade 2 years ago. Trying to offset this through better training and supervision. Handing out warnings for dismissible offences so as not to lose a resource. Looking in different places for great people - service stations, cafes, retail. Anyone with a good attitude gets a business card and an invitation to call.
 - We are a small landscaping team, and the leading hand/foreman gets a phone package and a company ute for use at all times. As the owner and manager, I am spending a lot more time e on the tools and paperwork is now being done outside of the normal working day. I am giving the guys coffee and cakes/pies more than I used to and afterwork beers at the pub every other week. Paying the unskilled guys more than they are worth but I need them. If they want to upskill, I will assist them. Recent 2-day trip to Fieldays all paid for by the company including accommodation, food, travel and wages. Really trying to make the guys enjoy being at work and being as accommodating as possible.
 - Provide a sign on bonus of 3k for technical staff - we also operate a staff referral payment.
 - I have worked in the field of organizational development for over 25 years and across the board NZ is generally quite poor when it comes to its focus on its human resource assets and has plenty of scope for improvement. The general bar is set at meeting the minimum statutory requirements or just over. The current environment is tipping the scales in favour of the employee and providing a competitive advantage to employers that

are embracing employee-focused change initiatives. The starting place for such initiatives is best established in fertile soil. In an organizational sense that means settling any major staff disputes that may be unsettling the culture as this always stymies any positive intent. This can take a bit of time and specialist advisory support. The aim is to develop a reasonably settled employment culture to work with. Then work on aligning the Board and executive team (top-down) with the staff voice (bottom-up). This basically means articulating a strategic priority to focus on staff and culture that the board and executive team will be relentless about and investing in meaningful staff discussions to identify initiatives that have the biggest impact on employee engagement. Most of the time this will come back to reward, recognition and taking action as in delivering on the results you commit to. Once this programme of work is articulated, the rest is down to implementation, tracking and monitoring and being open and transparent with your communications. Sounds like a basic recipe but many fall short when it comes to follow-through and therefore lose trust and credibility with their employees and therefore never raise the bar with their culture and consequently blame external forces such as the labour market for their staffing issues.

- We are offering part time work and have been inundated. Suggest Flexibility is the key.
- We have offered all of our team the opportunity to work extra hours over July-September up to five extra hours per week paid. In the past, extra hours would have been "banked" as glide time for time off in Summer.
- Retaining - tradespeople provided with monthly GP target and percentage of "over target" paid as bonus, the greater the "over" the greater the percentage.
Retaining - tradespeople tend to

comprehend only their base hourly rate. Really important to ensure they understand gross earnings are both base rate AND bonus. Staff that were going to leave for higher base rate changed their mind when bonus was calculated.

- Recruiting good staff is VERY difficult at the moment - but as a business owner it's imperative that any new member of our team is a good fit with my existing experienced crew - we therefore take a good deal of time and even schedule a number of meetings as well as interviews, not with management, but with the direct team members new staff will be working with in order to try and garner as much feedback before any appointment is made.
- Looking after existing staff is imperative - the basics of good communication, fair reward and a collaborative management structure go a long way towards ensuring that all aspects of the employment relationship is fair and reasonable. Finally remember, that the best ideas and innovations don't necessarily emanate from the ivory tower of the business owner!
- The sector I work in is extremely short of the highly skilled staff needed, and this will get worse over the next 10 years as retirement wave continues. I have a strategy to both retain and recruit. This strategy is very simple and very effective - at it's heart is to treat people exceptionally well. I do this by paying upper quartile salaries, generous conditions, lots of leave, plenty of flexibility for work/life and family requirements, not micromanaging, treating people with respect, and caring for the people I employ. In return I get a very high level of staff loyalty, very low staff turn over, hard work and high staff productivity, lots of fun in the workplace, and the ability to recruit exceptional new team members who want to join this environment. This strategy is easy to describe, but takes consistent effort to successfully implement.



A good submission

One respondent wrote this, and I thought it so good it should have its own page.

I have tonnes of experience in this space as I own a recruitment company that I started over 20 years ago, I have offices across NZ and Australia, and we have a team of about 50. Here we go....

In this market your remuneration needs to be competitive with the current market before other benefits will be considered valuable. We have recently completed our annual market insights survey and the #1 benefit employees want is more work/life balance - this can be by way of flexible hours or the opportunity to work from home for some of their week (not all roles such as frontline workers can accommodate this - so consider flexibility in rosters e.g., a scheduled weekend off per month). Another example is providing extra leave such as birthday and/or mental health days e.g., 1 per 1/4 then the 5 days can be packaged as an additional week's annual leave.

A strong employment brands helps to attract candidates, but your promises need to be authentic and delivered. Engage your team, employment branding isn't just what you think you offer - it also includes the collective culture of your organisation.

Make sure the onboarding of new employees is great - provide clear expectations, lots of training and check-in to see how they are going and feeling about the business and the role. It's expensive to find new employees - don't lose them once you've got them!

Retain the team that you have - check in and make sure they are engaged with the business and happy in their roles, identify key staff and ensure you don't lose them. Counter offers

when your employee resigns are less effective than ensuring they are happy prior to them considering other jobs. Conduct regular meetings with your employees - review their performance and their short-, medium- and long-term career objectives - are you on the same page, can you provide opportunities within your business.

Job boards aren't delivering, look at your internal talent - can you promote within? Consider people with the right attitude but that might need some extra training to meet the skill gap, have a referral program for your team - if they recommend someone that gets hired - pay them (e.g. \$250-1000 - you could make the payment after the employee had completed 3 months in the business), work proactively with recruitment agencies - they are well connected to identify talent, have a good relationship with the recruiter (share your vision, challenges and potential) you could get first access to the best talent in town! Talk to local and schools and universities for entry level roles - you might find talent that you develop for the future.

Now is not the time to lowball job offers - you are likely to only get one crack at it.

Candidates, especially the great ones, are likely to be considering 3-5 opportunities - everyone in your business that is involved in the recruitment process should be pitching the business/job to candidates that they meet - make sure the candidate leaves your premises wanting the job! Keep your recruitment process tight and short - if you have multiple people involved in the decision consider having them interview together - don't have your process extend beyond 5-10 days - you will lose the candidate.



Links to publications

Tony's View Spending Plans Survey



Tony's View Business Survey



Tony's Thoughts Vlog



REINZ & Tony Alexander Real Estate Survey



Oneroof weekly column



mortgages.co.nz & Tony Alexander Mortgage Advisors Survey



Tony Alexander Regional Property Report



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