

HOW EMPLOYERS CAN ENGAGE WITH A YOUTH WORKFORCE

Engagement is winning hearts and minds.
Recruit for attitude, train for skills.



ADVERTISING

Advertising your job vacancy is all about finding young people and making connections with them. Social media is where young people hang out. Sites like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok offer recruiters a great opportunity to connect with candidates.

DAY-IN-THE-LIFE

Job ads and interviews don't necessarily give a great overview of the day-to-day job. This makes it hard for young people to understand what the job involves and whether it's the kind of work they would like to do. A great way to help is to feature day-in-the-life profiles of existing young employees.



Many job ads are read by young people on mobile devices, make sure your ad uses the right technology.

WORDING

Wording your job ad. Identifying entry level roles can be a slow and frustrating process for young job seekers, who must scrutinise the wording of every job ad to identify roles they can apply for. To make it easy for young people, list roles by experience required and include an 'Entry level' option in your search criteria.

EXPERIENCE

Young people tell us that unless a job ad states that no previous experience is required, they generally assume that they can't apply. Two out of three employers ask for previous experience for entry-level roles excluding a huge potential workforce.



COMMUNICATION

Employer Value Proposition – ensure what you stand for and what you can offer resonates with young people.



YOUR STORY

Bring your business story to life showcasing like-minded people. Stories can ignite passion in your future workforce. Māori and Pasifika are natural storytellers, communicating in this way is such an effective strategy.

WEBSITE

Websites and careers pages from companies with an overly corporate appearance could seem intimidating for young New Zealanders, while text-heavy sites with few images will give them the impression that the company is old-fashioned and not the sort of place where many young people would work, making them seem daunting.



Ensure your online approach matches your face-to-face efforts. Ensure your communication is simple, transparent, and personal.

TRY MESSAGING FIRST

They never answer their phone! Catch cry of all employers and parents. Young people are uncomfortable talking on the phone and dislike answering calls from numbers they don't recognise. Text first, introduce yourself and say why you will be calling them shortly. Don't leave voice messages and consider having a free phone 0800 for those without phone credit. You may have better success reaching young people in the afternoons or evening. If you used social media, try PM-ing with a number they can call.

JARGON

Avoid using jargon, industry slang, acronyms and technical language in entry level job ads or descriptions – this makes young people worry that they don't have the background knowledge to apply.



UPDATE THEM!

Update candidates frequently and make hiring decisions as quick as possible.

EMPATHY

Clearly define what a great organisational fit would be. Include initiatives or behaviours that are relatable values and attributes to a young person.



INTERVIEW

Interview in a way that draws out the kind of behaviours and attitudes that demonstrate a young person's potential to excel in the role. Don't rely on previous work experience. Whanau, volunteering, social action, education and sport can be a good alternative to assess attitude.

UNDERSTANDING

Many young people have personal commitments, such as caring responsibilities or studying part time so its important for them to know which roles will align with those commitments.



Form a relationship and establish trust.

DIVERSITY

Feature photos of a diverse selection of your employees including young people, this helps to create an impression of an inclusive, welcoming workplace. Young people strongly prefer photos or videos of real employees over stock photos.



CULTURE

Make an effort when pronouncing cultural names, places or terms. If effort and genuine interest are shown from the beginning the young person will be engaged and interested in working for the organisation.

PARTNER UP

Consider partnering with your local high school to develop a pipeline of future talent for your business. Careers Fairs, MSD Service Centres, Industry Roadshows are an opportunity for businesses to showcase their vacancies.



OFFERS

Young people are keen to see an outline of the support and training available in a role. Companies that provide this detail are very attractive.



TRANSPORT

Transport is a major barrier to employment. Include in your job ad the physical address and ideally a public transport option to get to work.

TRAINING

Many young people want to earn and learn on the job. Offering an opportunity to complete an apprenticeship or qualification as part of the role will be an attractive proposition.



PAPERWORK

Digitising your application forms through Google docs or Survey Monkey will be more accessible for young people than emailing forms to be completed.

RETAIN

Hold onto CV's and contact details of your applicants. They may not have been right for you this time but keeping a database for future opportunities could save you time re-advertising.



FLEXIBILITY

Young people are attracted to roles that offer work/life balance. This is not necessarily reduced hours, it may be the opportunity to work from home or outside normal hours.



RESPOND

Acknowledge every application you receive. Send an email on the same day to say it has been received and outline the recruitment time frame and process. If they are unsuccessful, email them to let them know but say you will keep their CV on file. All job seekers have experienced never hearing back on jobs they apply for which is demoralising.