

Tomorrow's Workforce Award Highly Commended: Fletcher Building Limited



Video Link <https://vimeo.com/178545422/cf614cc453>

Fletcher Building has developed an initiative to solve a business problem, (a souring and ageing workforce), and at the same time address youth unemployment.

The initiative, a partnership with the Ministry of Social Development, now sees motivated young adults successfully working in entry-level positions.

The programme was developed to provide young people opportunities to gain work experience and skills from Fletcher Building's business units. It grew from a successful three-month pilot which began in September 2015 when 16 Limited Service Volunteer (LSV) recruits were offered fixed-term work experience

The Fletcher Building and Ministry of Social Development Partnership Programme extended this concept to include young people (18-24 years) sourced from Work and Income around New Zealand.

This initiative not only gives young New Zealanders the opportunity to start a career with one of the country's biggest employers, it also means business units can quickly recruit motivated and hardworking candidates for their entry-level roles, spending less time and money using labour agencies.

So far 53 young people have been given meaningful employment.

There was some reluctance at the beginning of the partnership. At first many business units were hesitant to participate as there was a fear of the unknown. In the past, some hiring managers had tried to recruit young people and on the whole, had not had a great experience. To improve that outcome, team support was wrapped around each young person in the form of a line manager, a labour hire manager, a buddy and a mentor.

As success stories unfolded these were shared far and wide to 'recruit' new business units to be involved. The stories focussed not only on the calibre of the candidates sourced but also on the demonstrable leadership shown by those managers that had been involved with the programme.

Rob Wilson, Southern Operations Manager, Steel Distribution filled his entry-level positions with MSD candidates and says they are exceptional employees, "The MSD course has impressed us with the quality of the candidates, particularly their ability to communicate and listen."

Several benefits have been noted. Firstly the company's reliance on agency workers has been reduced, along with associated fees. And the attrition rate for the Labour Pool candidates is lower than Fletcher's mainstream workforce, which has huge financial, time and resource benefits. The Labour Pool is now viewed as a more commercially viable form of recruitment, a huge measure of its success.

The support of all involved, including the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Defence, Work Brokers, hiring managers and young people is recognised at a high level. Fletcher Building CEO Mark Adamson hosts an annual morning team where awards are given to those individuals whom have shown ongoing commitment and exceptional support.

The new recruitment programme has been life changing for many young people

Nineteen-year-old Te Marama Taomia, from Papakura, wakes at 4am to catch a bus to her labouring job at Wynyard Quarter in downtown Auckland.

She works six days a week sweeping, clearing rubbish, shifting tools and moving supplies, and recently she started painting.

It is hard work but Te Marama is satisfied. "I never thought I'd be doing a job like this, but I'm really happy and it's a great job for me. I'm an active and creative hands-on person, and I enjoy moving around and not being stuck in an office. I also enjoy meeting new people on the site. It's typically not a woman's job, so at first the guys on site were surprised that three women joined the labouring team. My team are like my family.

"We get good on-the-job training. Once you get the hang of the job, it gets easier, and I'm quickly getting stronger. I'm developing good life skills here and there are lots of opportunities. Having this job means that I can be a successful woman. If I stay at Fletcher I

could become a site manager like my boss. I can now work toward buying a car and house, and providing for my family. I also want to travel the world.”

The programme’s success could not be summed up better.