

Walk the Talk Award Entrant: Toni Lea – Fletcher Building Limited



Fletcher Building Workforce Recruitment Manager Toni Lea was tasked with placing 14 young people into her company. It is testament to her infectious commitment and dedication that she has employed 53 to date.

She has a 90% retention rate with the added “compliment” that two of her candidates have been poached.

Toni’s leadership of the “Labour Pool” recruitment programme, (a partnership with the Ministry of Social Development which introduces motivated young adults to entry-level positions) has been exceptional.

Toni goes above and beyond in her advocacy for the programme and the young people she hires.

Toni has campaigned relentlessly - putting her own credibility on the line- to urge hiring managers to have faith in the channel.

There was some reluctance from business units at the beginning of the partnership. At first many 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 Toni wrapped team support around each young person in the form of a line manager, a labour hire manager, a buddy and a mentor.

Toni's commitment includes making herself available whenever young people need her help or support - their challenges are not restricted to the traditional 9 to 5 Monday to Friday employment scenario. Toni makes the time outside of work hours for no other reason than to make the programme and experience for young people and hiring managers a success.

Her dedication is what has made the difference in bringing the programme to life. In many cases the candidates have had little or no positive role modelling in their lives and Toni has been a pillar for them to look up to and there is a mutual respect for each other. The young people want to do a great job and make Toni proud as they know she steps outside of her remit to support them.

One candidate wrote to Toni to say: "Thank you for playing a major part in our lives, for this life changing experience. For your aroha, and dedication you have shown us since day one. For believing in us before we believed in ourselves."

As well as helping young people into work, Toni's influence has had a positive business impact on sites that have traditionally had an older workforce. The introduction of young, enthusiastic workers has positively changed the culture and in some cases the performance.

Also, where businesses have traditionally hired only males, the introduction of females into their workforce has also made a positive difference to the culture. The young people's dedication to work and their new pathways have inspired other employees to better themselves.

There has also been a commercial return to Fletcher Building with the introduction of the Labour Pool. The company is reducing reliance on agency workers and therefore reducing the fees. More importantly the attrition rate for the Labour pool candidates is lower than our mainstream workforce- which has huge financial, time and resource benefits. The Labour Pool is now viewed as a more commercially viable form of recruitment.