

# EMPLOYER INSIGHTS SURVEY

## ISSUE 1 2011

Welcome to Robert Walters' Employer Insights Newsletter. Recently we surveyed hiring managers across both our Auckland and Wellington offices. The survey results provide a snapshot of how businesses deal with some of the current issues facing the New Zealand employment market. In this issue we provide insights around how new employees have been secured and explore the different work-life balance initiatives businesses offer.

### PREPARING FOR SKILLS SHORTAGES



With the attraction and retention of key staff becoming harder for many industry sectors, the need for employers to focus on their hiring and retention strategies is widely recognised as an important step to ensure future business growth in New Zealand.

In order for these strategies to have the best possible outcome it is imperative that we gain an understanding of what current practices exist. Are businesses in New Zealand hiring and if so, what have been the most successful talent acquisition strategies? What policies currently exist to support and retain employees and how are employees being engaged?

This issue of the Employer Insights Survey begins to delve into some of these issues by asking hiring managers to answer a range of questions relating to their recent experiences and the strategies their company currently implements.

#### THE PROFESSIONALS WE SURVEYED COME FROM THE FOLLOWING DISCIPLINES:

Accounting, Finance & Banking		37.4%
General Management		6.4%
Human Resources		16.4%
Information Technology		22.4%
Procurement & Supply Chain		5.0%
Sales, Marketing & Communications		8.8%
Secretarial & Business Support		1.8%
Other		1.8%

## RECRUITING NEW STAFF



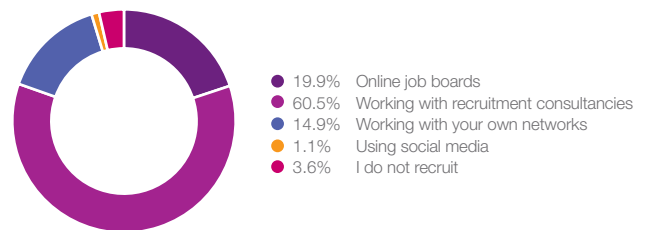
We first asked survey participants what approach had been most successful when previously recruiting new staff. Over half of the respondents felt working with recruitment consultancies was the most successful approach, followed by the use of online job boards. Working with existing networks was also seen to be successful, with 14.9% of respondents indicating they had previously recruited staff this way. Despite the emergence of social media recently, only a very small percentage had successfully utilised this for recruitment of staff.

Encouragingly, 82.2% of survey respondents have recruited roles recently and the majority have been able to find suitable employees within two to four weeks of recruiting. Over a quarter of respondents reported that the recruitment process took four to six weeks, with only 8.2% of participants reporting that they were able to secure a new employee in less than two weeks. A longer recruitment process, over six weeks, was experienced by 18.5% of survey participants.

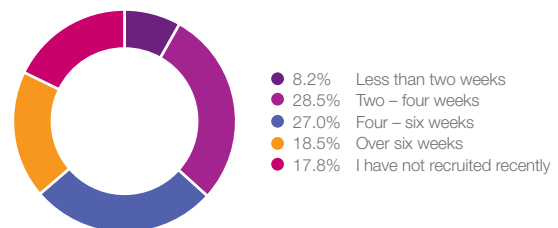
While many of our survey respondents have recruited recently and reasonably quickly there are certainly pockets of demand that the local candidate market is unable to service and many of our clients are turning to talent communities based overseas. Many of the ex-pats we speak to prior to their return to New Zealand are concerned about how their overseas experience will translate in the local employment market. Our results indicate that the majority of our respondents are either generally excited about the skills candidates with international experience can offer or have no opinion either way. A very small percentage of respondents indicated disinterest or lack of understanding of how international experience relates to their business.

Nearly a quarter (21%) of respondents indicated that they prefer potential employees with local experience.

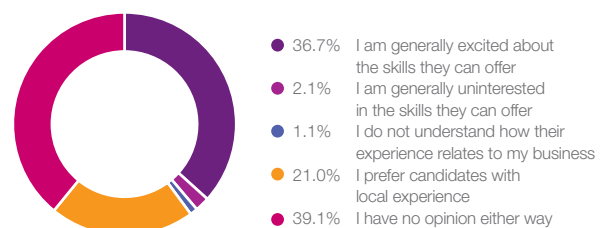
### IN YOUR EXPERIENCE WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST SUCCESSFUL APPROACH FOR FINDING NEW EMPLOYEES FOR ROLES YOU HAVE RECRUITED PREVIOUSLY?



### IF YOU HAVE RECRUITED ROLES RECENTLY HOW LONG HAS IT TAKEN TO FIND SOMEBODY SUITABLE?



### WHAT IS YOUR IMPRESSION OF CANDIDATES WITH INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE?



## EMPLOYEE SUPPORT & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In order to gain insight into what employee support strategies exist and their perceived impact, we first asked survey participants what they thought motivated their staff most, so that the most effective policies can be implemented and/or built on.

Close to half (43.8%) of respondents thought acknowledgement and appreciation motivates their staff the most, followed by work colleagues and/or the company culture. Only 14.2% indicated that their staff were motivated by the challenges of the role and the least motivating factor was perceived to be remuneration.

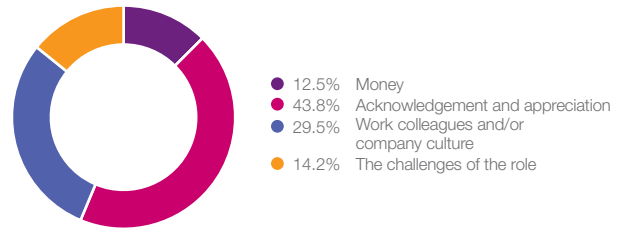
Three quarters of our respondents feel their business values work-life balance, with only a very small percentage indicating otherwise. Nearly 20% of survey participants felt that the value their business places on work-life balance depends on what is being requested and/or offered.

According to our survey participants, most businesses offer a combination of work-life balance initiatives, providing the option of flexitime, working from home and offering flexibility in taking leave. For those businesses that offer one of the above in isolation, the most prevalent initiative was offering employees flexitime, whereby staff can choose when they start or finish work. This was followed closely by offering employees flexibility in taking leave, with 17.1% of respondents reporting this was the only work-life initiative they offered staff. Offering employees the ability to work from home on either a regular or occasional basis was the least implemented strategy, with 8.5% of respondents signifying this option was available to their staff. A small percentage of survey participants reported that their company did not offer any work-life initiatives.

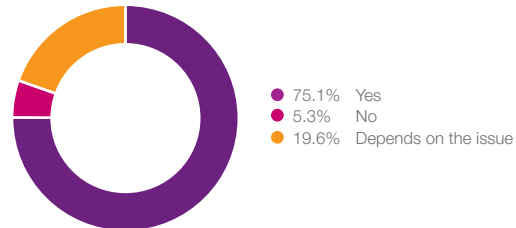
For those respondents who do offer work-life balance initiatives for their staff, an overwhelming 71% reported that they felt the performance of their staff improved as a result of having these initiatives available to them. Conversely, nearly 20% of survey participants indicated that they did not think the performance of their staff was affected by the work-life initiatives offered and 8.2% were unable to comment based on their above response.

We also asked survey participants what training and development initiatives their company offered staff as these can impact employee engagement and retention. The majority of respondents do offer their staff training and development initiatives, with most offering a combination of regular training and succession planning. A small proportion of participants reported that they did not offer any training or development but the survey results indicate that many companies offer at least regular training, with 41.3% reporting this as their sole strategy. Of the initiatives the survey respondents had to choose from, offering succession planning was least likely, with only 5.3% reporting that this was their only initiative.

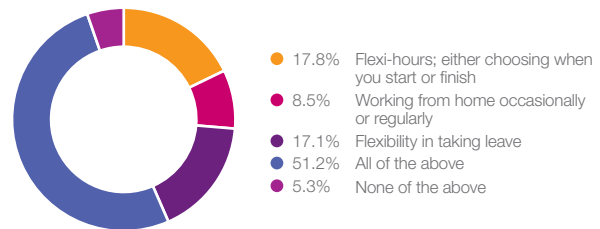
### WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU THINK MOTIVATES YOUR STAFF MOST IN THE WORKPLACE?



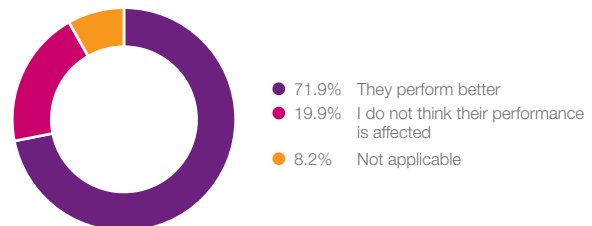
### DO YOU FEEL YOUR COMPANY VALUES WORK-LIFE BALANCE?



### WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WORK-LIFE BALANCE INITIATIVES DOES YOUR COMPANY CURRENTLY OFFER?



### HOW DO YOU THINK THE ABOVE WORK-LIFE INITIATIVES IMPACT ON YOUR TEAM'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE AT WORK?



### WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES DOES YOUR COMPANY CURRENTLY EMPLOY?



## EMPLOYEE SUPPORT & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

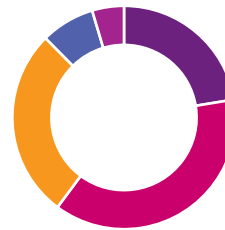


Although succession planning did not rank highly as an isolated training and development initiative, most of our survey participants indicated that they do regularly meet with their staff to discuss their progress and overall performance. Our results show that this is more likely to occur on a monthly, as opposed to a weekly basis. Less than 5% of respondents reported that they do not catch up with their staff to discuss progress and overall performance, while 27.4% do so quarterly.

Another important piece of the puzzle when investigating how best to retain key employees is to explore how hiring managers communicate with their staff, as this can provide important indicators of what workplace behaviours are present and how these behaviours might impact company culture and employer brand. Your employees will talk to friends and family about their place of work and as we become more skills short it's important that they are spreading a positive message about your business to potential employees.

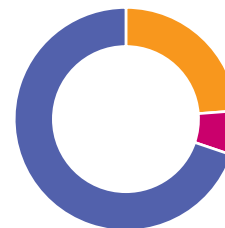
When asked how they communicate with staff members, the majority of our survey respondents indicated they do this mostly by going and speaking to them directly. Very few participants favoured talking to staff members via phone, with only 6.4% reporting this was their most preferred form of communication. Under a quarter or participants, 23.8% reported they were most likely to communicate with staff via email.

### HOW OFTEN DO YOU CATCH UP WITH YOUR STAFF TO DISCUSS THEIR PROGRESS AND OVERALL PERFORMANCE?



- 22.4% At least once a week
- 37.7% At least once a month
- 27.4% Quarterly
- 7.8% Annually
- 4.6% I don't discuss my progress or performance with my staff

### HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER STAFF MEMBERS?



- 23.8% Mostly via email
- 6.4% Mostly over the phone
- 69.8% Mostly by going and speaking to them directly

For further information or if you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact your Robert Walters consultant:

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