

CONNECTIONS

talent central news

April 2022

Since our last newsletter in November, New Zealand has had its ups and downs and Covid-19 lockdowns. Our region has been no different. The strength and resilience of the Manawātū has shone through, with schools and businesses putting their best foot forward and carrying on as best they could. They have stayed connected to Talent Central, and kept us updated on their activities and where TC can best provide support through these changing times.

2022 has got off to a great start with schools and businesses working through the various complexities of omicron transmission and self-isolation. TC has been fortunate to have been able to carry on and avoid any infections. Our thanks go to those schools and business who continued to engage with us through Term One.

When we reconnected with schools in February, it was great to hear how many school leavers had taken what they had learnt through the WorkReady Course, Industry Visits and Work Experience and turned this into full time employment. Congratulations to all 96 school leavers who are now employed. To all those employers we are connected to, thank you for making the commitment to engage a school leaver and support their development. Schools have told us that a further 65 students, who had been enrolled in the WorkReady Course, have moved on to further education in Polytechnics and Universities. This is a great outcome for those choosing to pursue higher qualifications before entering the world of work.

Industry visits have started again in Term One, all be it with reduced numbers per visit. Businesses are happy to see us, but have kept the numbers to under 5 students per visit, down from the 9 usual numbers seen in pre-omicron times. This has had an upside, with more students being offered work experience as businesses can engage with them on a one-to-one basis.

Driving lessons are back for 2022 and got off to a great start at the beginning of the Term, but have been challenging in the latter weeks of March as omicron impacts on schools. The comment from one school had a fitting comparison with a sports team when he was looking for driving lesson participants and said, “I have almost emptied the bench and I’m looking round for anybody who can go”. This has seemed a familiar story for everyone we deal with and hopefully the break to Term Two will see us come back recovered and ready to start afresh. The driving lessons are proving

very successful, with 90% of students passing their restricted driving test at their first attempt. Historically Palmerston North has pass rates around 70%. Well done to our instructors from Alltrain Ltd and to the students who passed their licenses.

A special “thank you” to PTS Logistics Ltd for providing the little red Suzuki car that has become so familiar around the schools. It is through the ongoing support of PTS that Talent Central is able to provide driving lessons to the region.



Another day of driving lessons at Feilding High School.

Local Businesses

We have continued to receive strong support from local businesses since October 2021. Businesses have been open to visits with students and have provided many opportunities for students to experience what it is like to be in a workplace. These visits have led to opportunities for students to undertake work experience, and in some cases become employees. This has led to a phrase which you may begin to hear more frequently...that an employer is “Youth Ready.”

Talent Central engages with many employers who are Youth Ready, and this is where we support most students into long-term employment and apprenticeships. One of our Youth Ready employers is Tracgrip, a privately owned Engineering & Hydraulics Company founded in 1950 and located in Tremaine Avenue, Palmerston North. Tracgrip is an ISO 9001 quality assured organisation that is a leader in its field of engineering and hydraulics, where 4000 square metres of workshop space, dedicated areas for hydraulic service, fabrication, machining, and engineering assembly allow the company to carry out large engineering contracts.

Tracgrip has consistently sought out young people to join their business and become part of their employee team. Tracgrip provides work experience opportunities for prospective employees. This enables students to come in and get a “feel” for the business and decide whether this opportunity is right for them. It enables the business to see how the new person will “fit” with their existing workforce, and how they interact within the team. Tracgrip ensures there are entry level roles available to accommodate new staff, and that staff feel welcomed when they join their business. This commitment is demonstrated by Tracgrip employing a total of six apprentices since October 2021.

To support the new staff there is an “employee development plan” in place that identifies and demonstrates the pathways for progression, and the skills and training required at each progression. If they are to be an apprentice, they are connected to the appropriate ITO and receive support with their assignments and collection of supporting information from the workplace. To assist with this process, apprentices have a “buddy” to guide and mentor their progress. Tracgrip believe this mentoring and support are vital to the success of the apprentice, and to succession planning within the organisation.

To bring all this together the new employee has an employment agreement that sets out what their role is, and what is expected of them in that role. The agreement includes the training and development they will receive and the pathway within the business. There are dates for performance reviews and what is expected of the new employee by these dates. The new employee receives a full induction and health and safety training before they take up their role, to ensure they are safe and looking out for their workmates in the workplace. And finally, they receive the equipment needed to do the job. For this business it is steel capped boots, overalls, safety glasses and gloves. This equipment then becomes the property of the new employee and is part of being safe and protected in the workplace. Talent Central sees this proactive and engaged approach as being “best practice” and what it truly means to be “Youth Ready”.

For employers who make the effort to be “Youth Ready” it is very rewarding, with staff having pride in the business and job that they do. This leads to job satisfaction and staff committing and staying with a business longer. It also supports succession planning and enables the business to create a future for itself. Businesses that Talent Central engage with who are “Youth Ready” generally have very low staff turnover and consistently provide sustainable and satisfying roles for school leavers.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Tracgrip for their contribution to this newsletter, and for their contribution to the wider Manawātū community in providing opportunities for young people.

To all those businesses who have provided visits, work experience and employment opportunities to the schools and students we work with, thank you. We appreciate what you do in enabling young people to become Work Ready and prepared for the workplace.

