



Kick-start your career in New Zealand



An online guide for
international students

Are you planning to work in New Zealand and needing guidance on the best way to approach it?

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The power of your personal brand, how you communicate, your ability to adapt and self-leadership



This guide will simplify the process with practical advice to help in your search for employment in New Zealand or overseas.

GROW YOUR NETWORK OF INFLUENCE

+ How to network & build mutually beneficial relationships

Does the idea of networking and making small talk with a bunch of strangers intimidate you?! You're not alone. Our article will help you network in a fun and authentic way; by being yourself and connecting with people you like.

By expanding your network beyond your regular group of friends and peers, you may discover opportunities, meet prospective clients and mentors not possible otherwise.

It's a chance to improve your skills and knowledge, stay up to date with the latest trends and job market. In this guide, we share some important tips on how to grow your network, and how to network well.



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Surveys have shown that up to **85%** of people have landed jobs through **networking**



Have a greater purpose in networking & remain positive

Some people are nervous about networking and coming across as self-serving. However, by focussing on how networking can benefit a greater purpose, it will seem more selfless.

For example, being surrounded by experts in your field can help you to improve your own knowledge and skills, and in turn, be of greater benefit to your clients or patients.



Networking in person

Find out their passions and find something you have in common, keep it simple. For example, ask why they came to the networking in the first place. This simple question will help break the ice.

As a first step, think about how you can help the person you have just met. You never how they could help you down the track. As an initial gesture, try to introduce them to someone at the event or in your network. Helping others is a strong way to make more meaningful connections in networking events and build **longer lasting relationships.**



Prioritize your networking

There isn't time to connect with everyone in your network, so prioritize the people you admire and whose values align with yours. You can learn something from everyone you meet, and at times, it's the people you least expect it that could help you when you need it.



Make authentic connections based on mutual interests or values

It takes time to nurture any relationship, and building a solid network is no different. It makes a difference when you do research to identify shared interests and values with others to make a thoughtful introduction.

You will get better with practice, so be consistent and patient, and accept rejection gracefully. There are still plenty of people out there who are keen to be apart of your network. Try and identify ways of working together – it has been shown that long-lasting professional relationships are more likely to develop if you are able to work on tasks that require mutual collaboration.



Choosing a mentor

It is always helpful to learn from the wisdom of someone who has reached a stage in their career, or has the skill set, that you are aiming towards. Assess if they are even happy with their career.

Do careful research about their work and try to understand how they think, and why they do what they do, and see if their mindset and work ethic aligns with yours.



Network in-person and online

You can begin by writing down a list of people who can help you to develop a network, including your university careers counsellor, colleagues, and peers.

Browse websites/apps such as Facebook, Clubhouse, Quora, Reddit, meetup.com and Twitter.

Do research about local support networks you can join, such as industry and alumni associations, LinkedIn, sports and personal interest groups. Attend classes, workshops, conferences, events, parties, social gatherings.



Know the value you can offer

When you're early in your career, it can feel like you don't have much to offer someone who is better established in theirs. Instead take the time to build a good reputation for yourself: be talented, helpful, motivated, supportive and look for mutually beneficial connections between people. You could even introduce people to connections overseas that they may not otherwise have met.

It's helpful to remember that even if you are unable to offer tangible value, for example, information, social connections, technical support or money, you can still offer goodwill in the form of recognition, gratitude to enhance their reputation as a strong leader.

Such knowledge and skills are sought after, so don't forget the value you can offer.

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If you've recently completed your studies, you may be more aware of emerging markets, and have more experience using new technology, as well as generational trends and cultural considerations, both in New Zealand and overseas in your home country.

Going to networking events

So, it's finally time to put yourself out there. When you find yourself at a networking event, especially if it's your first, it's easy to feel nervous and overwhelmed, but here are some tips to make the experience more comfortable for you:




Your preparation beforehand

- Ask a friend to come along, but remember that you're there to meet new people.
- Identify and research specific people that you want to meet
- Ensure that you have enough business cards
- Arrive on time so you appear enthusiastic and organised



Interacting with others

- To find the people you want to connect with, position yourself near areas where they converge – usually at the food and drinks, or the bar
- Have an elevator pitch ready, to help spark interest and conversation with potential leads or ask an ice breaker question: “What brought you to this event?”
- Focus on being of service – how can you add value to the person you are talking to?
- Identify mutually beneficial connections and ask for their business cards, rather than simply giving yours out to everyone
- Build relationships and rapport
- Be a good listener and ask specific questions, for example:
 - What do you consider to be the best and worst parts about the job? What is the company culture like?
 - What sort of training did you complete to be in this role?



Before you leave, thank the host and people who were helpful to you, such as those who provided information, contacts, or a referral.

Relax, be confident and have fun!



Keep growing your professional network

A bigger network means more resources and potential opportunities for you, so it pays to continue to network even when you already have a job. So, here's how to do it successfully:

Invest time into keeping in touch with existing contacts.

Ask for personal referrals from existing contacts. This is a good icebreaker to initiate meaningful conversations. Be mindful that the introduction also reflects on your contact who made it.

Building connections within your company helps to create a positive company culture. It can increase your chances of being considered for internal job vacancies, improve productivity and collaboration between teams and departments.

Continue to have a positive impact on your network and actively make connections between contacts.

Networking is a skill that you can get better at with time, patience and being consistent. You can start practicing today. Remember, we achieve and learn more when we combine our skills and talents with others. Allow your network to bring people together so that everyone has their chance to shine.

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Allow your network to bring people **together** so that everyone has their chance to **shine**.

PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARDS

+ What are employers looking for in your CV & Cover letter

Are you currently slaving away at university, dreaming of the day you'll finally finish your degree and enter the New Zealand workforce as a bona fide graduate?

Well, we hate to tell you, but dreaming alone isn't quite going to cut it.

Fear not. The team at IDP has put together a few tips to help you get your foot in the door at your perfect job.



Plan Ahead. Like, Now

While we all know we can't completely control the future, there's nothing wrong with some prep when it comes to hunting down a job in New Zealand. Far better to plan than to be stressed out about finding a job at the end of your course.

So begin your job preparation early. We recommend starting now, while you're still studying. Areas such as improving your English (both written and spoken) and networking with people in your chosen field are great stepping stones that you can start right away.

If you have the time while studying, you can even try to secure a part-time job in your industry. Many companies take interns under their wing while they're still studying. This is bound to get you ahead of the pack - not only will you have something to put on your CV by the time you graduate, but you'll have a few handy industry contacts under your belt as well. Impress them enough, and that part-time or intern job may even blossom into a full-time position once you've finished your degree.

Dare To Dream

If you're still not 100% sure of where your career path lies, then this hack's for you. Grab a paper and pen, and write down what's important to you.

- ✔ What are your strengths?
- ✔ Your weaknesses? (be honest)
- ✔ What do you love to do, what gives you pleasure?
- ✔ What gets you out of bed in the morning?



What's Your Purpose?

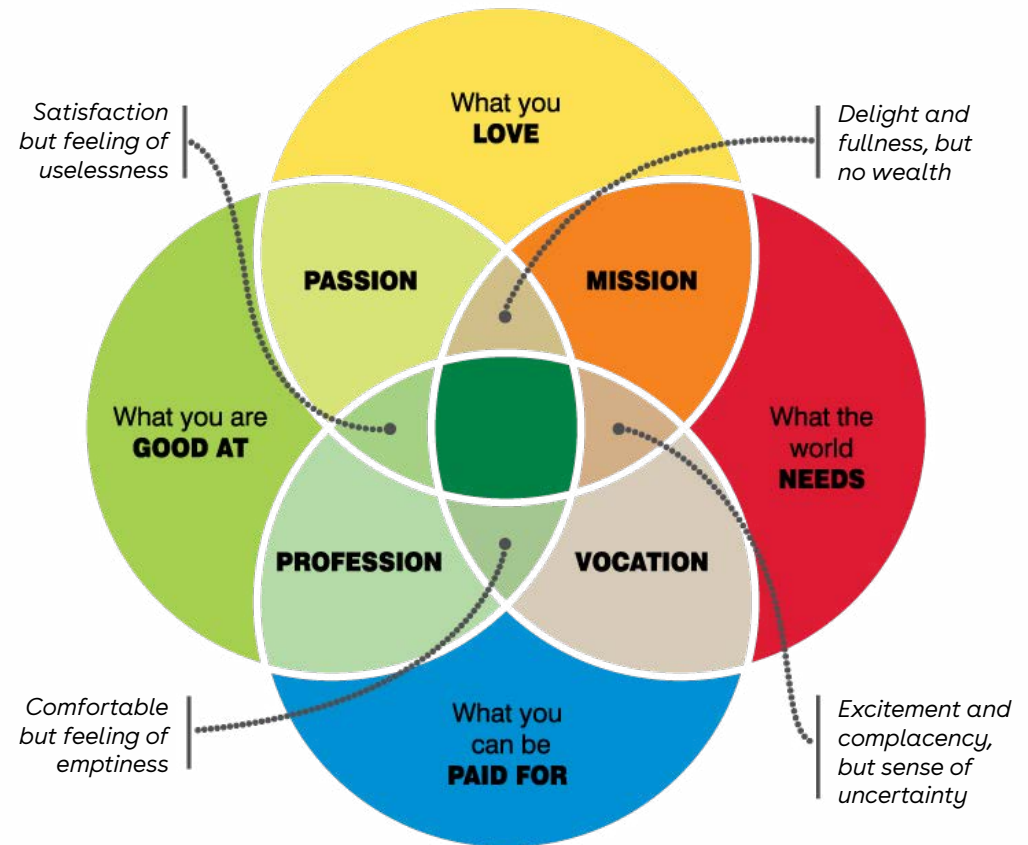
In the job-seeking world of dog-eat-dog, it can be easy to get caught up in the logistics of skills sets and lists. But think about what a recruiter's benefits are of employing you. You want to be able to take those wonderful skills and apply them to real-world solutions for an employer to see.

In a broader context, what's your purpose in the world? Remember - the greater purpose you feel, the more connected you are to your work - and the more you'll be able to enjoy it.

In Japan, this kind of self-reflection is called **Ikigai**. To find your own Ikigai, you'll need to get to the sweet spot that overlaps the four essential areas of what makes you you. Those four areas are:

What do you love?
What are you good at?
What can you be paid for?
What does the world need?

To find out more about Ikigai and how it can work for you, check out our blog post [here](#):



The Framework

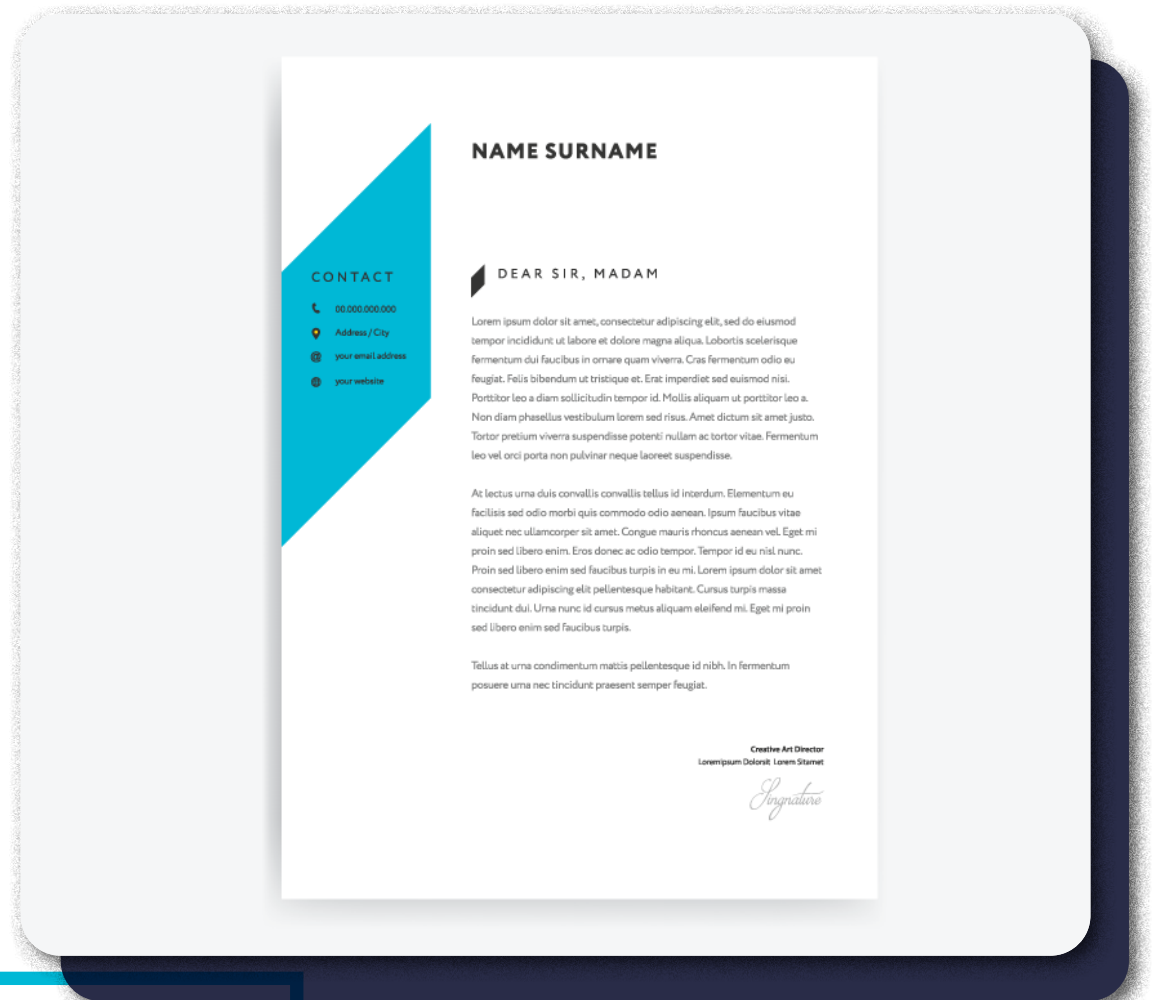
Now that you've done a bit of planning and dreaming, we come down to brass tacks. **Your job application.** A job application is generally made up of two components: a cover letter and a curriculum vitae (CV).

The Cover Letter

A cover letter is your golden ticket to grabbing the recruitment officer by the lapels and making them notice you. You want to ensure your cover letter is so compelling that they'll read it all the way to the very end. Explain why you should be hired for the job in your first paragraph. Your application needs to hold their interest, and you have a very short timeframe to do it. These days, the amount of time a recruitment officer takes to scan through a job application is just **six seconds**.

Your cover letter should


- Be one page. Recruiters don't have time to sift through multiple pages before they get to your CV
- Include all your contact details
- Don't make them search for how to reach you
- Customise each cover letter for each job application
Don't just write a 'blanket' one
- If there are any selection criteria in the job ad, address them here



The CV

Your curriculum vitae is the heart and soul of your job application. It needs to be all meat and no potatoes. In other words, no fluff.

Your CV should

- 
- Include your name and all your contact details
 - Include a summary of your achievements and what you bring to the table
 - Be no longer than two pages long. Three, tops.
 - Include your education & qualifications
 - Detail any work experience you have, as well as dates of employment
 - Have reference contacts of at least two people at the end

The whole idea behind a job application is to sell yourself. Don't be shy. Do your research beforehand, and find out what their pain points are. Struggling to source new customers? Or keep existing ones? Revenue issues? Show them how you can help be the answer to at least some of their problems.

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This is the time to sell **your benefits**, and **connect your solutions** to a company's problem.”



Get Creative

Can you imagine what it's like being a recruitment officer, ploughing through hundreds of cookie-cutter CVs all day, every day?

Colour Me Happy

Whether it's an infographic or a video, making your resume colourful and visually appealing is bound to get attention

Run a paid ad

Don't wait for the perfect job to come to you: write it up yourself and run it on LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter (or all three)

Work for free

If you're loving a company hard but they have no job vacancies, try offering your services for free. Once a company trusts you and you show them your value, they're far more likely to offer you a position

For more information about how you can create a cover letter and CV that shines, talk to your local IDP counsellors for assistance.



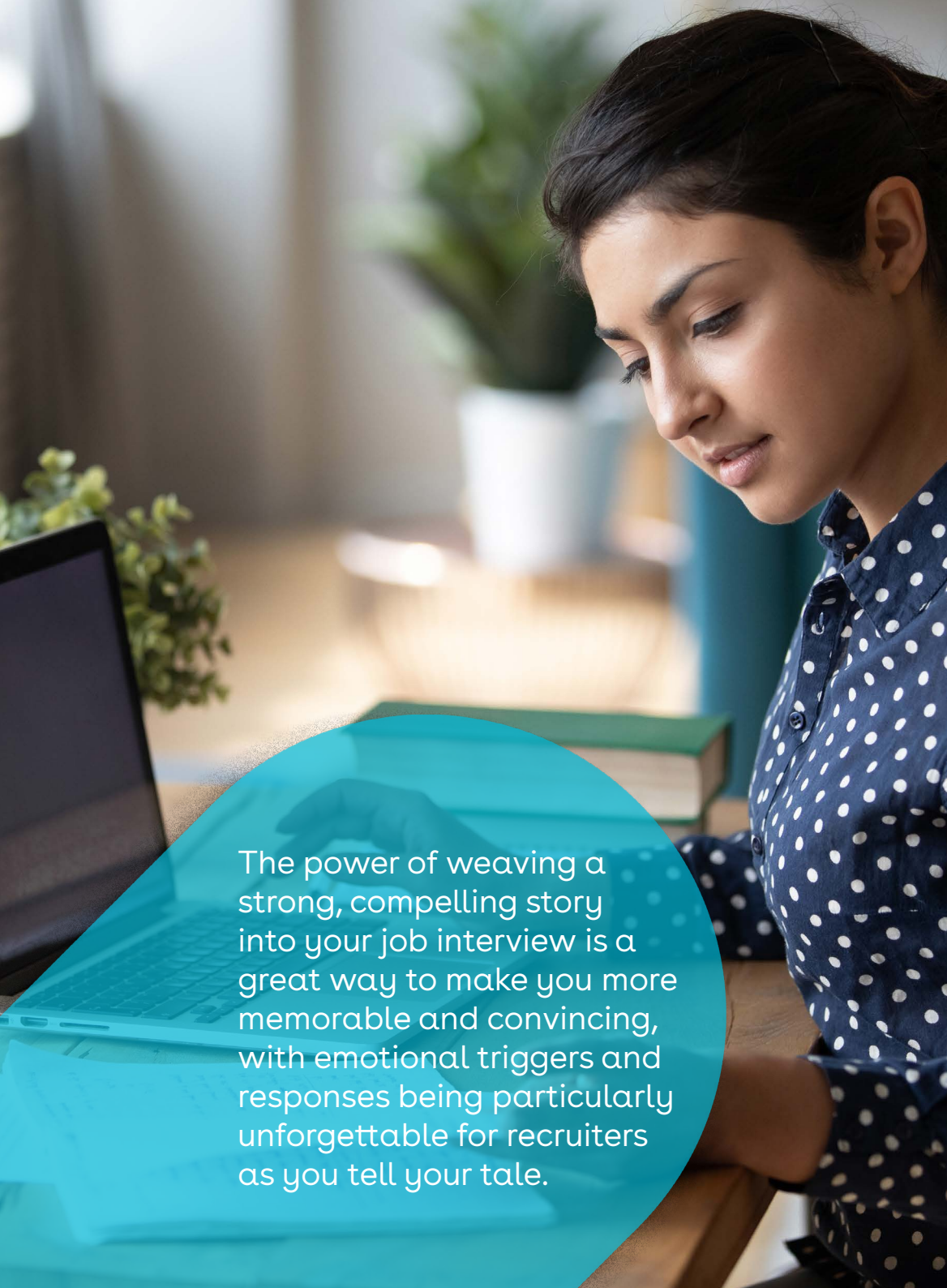
BE MEMORABLE AND SELL YOURSELF IN YOUR NEXT JOB INTERVIEW

+ How to present yourself and tell your story

So you've already nailed the job application and received a call-back for a face-to-face. Congratulations! You're one step closer to clinching a bona fide job in New Zealand.

Now it's down to the final step in the process - acing the job interview.





The power of weaving a strong, compelling story into your job interview is a great way to make you more memorable and convincing, with emotional triggers and responses being particularly unforgettable for recruiters as you tell your tale.

Be prepared

One of the easiest yet most important things you can do when preparing for a job interview is to research the company you're hoping to join. Whether it's checking out their website, stalking their socials or scanning through individual LinkedIn profiles, you'll want to make sure you know who they are and what they do.

The company will also expect you to have at least some passing knowledge about what they're about. Plus, doing your research shows them that you're keen, and helps you reign in the nerves.

You'll also want to note if there are any cultural differences to the workforce compared to your home country so you can prepare for that too.

Story time

One trick by recruitment officers is to try and encourage a job applicant to provide longer answers than a simple 'yes' or 'no' response. They often do this by asking situational or behavioural questions, such as:

"Tell us about a time you made a mistake and how you handled it."

"How would you deal with an unhappy customer?"
"What would you say is your greatest strength/weakness?"

Plan ahead for these often-curly questions by having a few answers up your sleeve before the interview. When telling your story, provide a brief summary of the situation, don't get too caught up in specifics, and share what the outcome was.

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If you don't feel confident with your English-speaking skills, storytelling can be a fantastic way to talk about experiences you have had or issues you have faced in your home country.

Practice makes perfect

By far one of the best ways to be prepared for an interview is to practice, practice, and practice some more. Stand in front of a mirror, and watch yourself speaking slowly and clearly. Smile, pull your shoulders back and try to exude confidence (even if you're not quite feeling it).

If you think you need to sharpen your English-speaking skills, try to incorporate everyday ways of improving English into daily life. For example, listening to podcasts, reading New Zealand newspapers, holding conversations with people at the shops and turning on the English subtitles on your latest Netflix binge (even if they don't always make sense).





Body talk

A recruiter can tell a lot from a job prospect by what they say. They can tell even more about them by how they act. Body language can play a huge role during your job interview, so make sure you get it right. According to body language experts, the ideal posture for interviews should be sitting up straight (no slumping) with your legs uncrossed and knees pointed towards the recruitment officer. Leaning forwards slightly to show interest will earn you extra brownie points.

Try not to fidget excessively - you want to give an air of being cool, calm and collected. Oh, and keen.

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Your biggest asset is the **unique individual** that you are, so don't be afraid to **just be yourself**



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Body language can play a huge role during your job interview



Dress to impress

You've done your research, practised your story-telling and are feeling pumped. Now, what the heck are you going to wear? Every industry dresses differently, and your job interview attire should reflect this. If you're not sure, have a sneak-peek through the company's socials to see what other employees in the office are wearing.

As a rule, corporate environments tend to be more suited up, while design and creative industries opt for cool, casual and funky. **Your outfit will also give the recruiter a heads-up on whether you're a good fit for their 'culture'.** Sporting a mohawk might not cut it in a banking interview, but could be just what a funky marketing company is looking for.



Feeling nervous?

Perfectly natural. And recruiters will expect it. **Relax** - you're in a safe space. Job interviews are listed as one of the most stressful life experiences you can have, so recruitment officers are generally pretty understanding that you're going to be nervous (especially if you're fresh out of university). By doing your company research, practising the answers to a few test questions and brushing up on your English (if required), you're bound to ace it.



Your biggest asset is the unique individual that you are, so don't be afraid to just be **yourself**.

And if it doesn't pan out?
That's okay. **There's always tomorrow.**

For more information about how job applications, visas and working in New Zealand, talk to [your local IDP counsellors for assistance](#).



Group Interviews

Group interviews are not massively popular in New Zealand, but according to data they're on the rise. Essentially, they can go one of two ways. They can either be one recruiter interviewing multiple candidates at a time, or one job applicant being interviewed by multiple people, such as a panel.

So how do you stand out from the crowd? Try not to see the other candidates as competitors, but rather colleagues. **Be inclusive, be friendly** and, if necessary, **lead the charge**. Try your best to not give the same answer as another candidate and, when it's your turn to speak, speak with **purpose and confidence**.



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When a recruiter asks a question, **listen carefully, and answer succinctly**



Listen & learn

Job interviews aren't all about talking about yourself. They're about listening too. When a recruiter asks a question, **listen carefully, and answer succinctly**. Don't waffle for minutes on end and - even worse - don't interrupt the recruiter. Show that you're listening by looking the interviewer straight in the eye and nodding occasionally. The most important times to listen in an interview are at the beginning (when introductions are being made) and at the end (when you're being told about the next step in the interview process).



How to Show Your Value At Work

Being able to demonstrate your value - particularly in a work environment - is important for a whole raft of reasons. Whether it's getting your foot in the door at a new job, applying for a promotion or requesting a pay rise, you'll want to make sure your employer knows that you are so valuable, they simply can't live without you.

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Every single person in the world has value, with their own unique set of skills, characteristics, and know-how to bring to the table.

Communication

And with all that value, you'll want to make sure that the people who matter at work know what it is. One of the best ways to do this is by keeping your communication channels clear and open - whether it be verbal, non-verbal or written.

Whenever you write for work - be it emails, reports, presentations, or even texts - write clearly and succinctly. Make sure you get your point across in a concise way and that your reader not only understands what it is you're trying to say, but that you're across any issues that may have arisen.

When it comes to face-to-face meetings or interviews, make sure the main players have your full attention. Listen carefully to what is being said, and contribute well-thought out ideas and opinions. Try not to waffle. Be aware of your body language, which means no slouching or fidgeting in your seat. You want to appear alert, aware and engaged at all times, not asleep at the wheel. Or table.

GROW YOUR LIFE EXPERIENCE & CONFIDENCE IN NEW ZEALAND

+ Be open to activities for personal growth in New Zealand

Ah, confidence. It's something most of us wish we had more of. Confidence isn't something you can learn from a book or a lecture room though. It's a state-of-mind kind of thing. Truly confident people have fully accepted who they are - both in body and mind - which leads to greater self-esteem. They also have a strong self-belief in the value of their own skills and abilities.

Here are a bunch of ways you can become more confident and expand your life experiences.



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So how can we improve our own confidence and how can our own life experiences help us, especially when it comes to job hunting?



The value of volunteering

Volunteering is massive in New Zealand, with many New Zealanders putting up their hands to help others through non-paid positions each year, resulting in a staggering \$3.5 billion boost to the economy.

Research from the United States indicates that people who volunteer are 27% more likely to find paid employment, as well.

There's nothing like volunteering regularly to add to your skill-set, provide new experiences, build compassion and empathy for others, help you understand New Zealand culture a little better - and improve your confidence. There are a whole galaxy of volunteering positions in different industries from caring for injured wildlife to cooking food for the homeless. Not only that, you're bound to meet a heap of positive, friendly people, build a social network and learn new skills.





Extracurricular activities

There's a popular saying that goes "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". In other words, go have some fun! New Zealanders love their sports and leisure activities, and there are literally thousands of groups throughout the country that you have the potential to join. Extracurricular activities help balance us out, teach us about something we're possibly already interested in, learn something new and meet loads of like-minded people in the process. Whether it be joining a tennis (or football or soccer or badminton) team, a wine club or a weekly yoga group, there are endless activities and pastimes for you to pursue.

So go on, get out there!



Part-time positions

Scoring yourself a part-time job is another great way to grow your life experiences and confidence here in New Zealand. One of the best bits? Not only do you get paid, but you have the potential to acquire valuable skills that could ease you into a full-time position once you graduate. There's plenty of part-time or casual placements to choose from, from working as a waiter/waitress in a cafe or restaurant to gardening or mowing lawns. But if you really want to be savvy, try to score a job in the industry you're keen to join.

Working as a part-time intern at your dream company may not only garner you with a relevant referee, but a full-time job down the track.



Be vulnerable

Let's face it, trying new things for the first time can be a little, well, daunting. You're out of your comfort zone, meeting new people and there's a high chance you could fail the first few times around. And that's absolutely okay. By trying new things - and failing now and again - is how we learn and grow as individuals. Nobody expects you to know everything perfectly.

And by letting ourselves be vulnerable, we're also leaving ourselves wide open for new experiences that could potentially lead us in a whole new exciting direction in life. After all, you know what they say - feel the fear, and do it anyway!

Try **Meetup**, where you can find your favourite activities and find like-minded people who also enjoy the same activities.



Job hunting

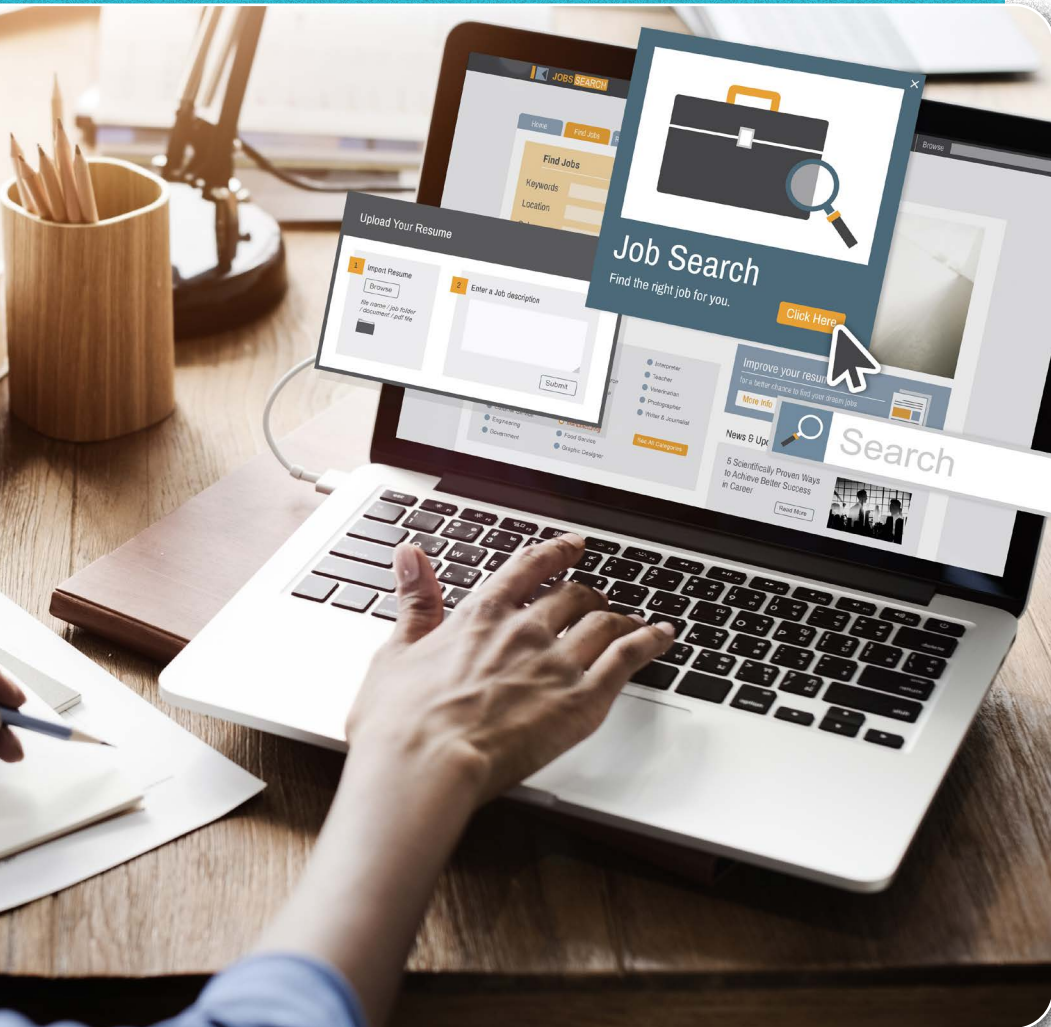
You might have an expectation on how the process will be to find employment. However, be open to other ideas as well. There is a saying, leave no stone unturned. Meaning be open to look at all avenues in finding a job. From building your network to applying through job sites, be open to different ways to secure employment.

Go direct - forget about waiting around for a job position. Go directly to the companies you're interested in working for and apply to them direct. Send them your CV and cover letter, and don't forget to follow up a few days later. Sure it take chutzpah to cold call them, but it also shows initiative - and confidence.

Recruitment agencies - there are thousands of recruitment agencies in New Zealand, with many of them laser-focused on specific industries (such as mining, accounting or health). Set up a few appointments with the recruitment agencies in your area, and have a chat to find out what the current job prospects are like in your sector. Don't forget to bring your resume!



Once you've got a few new life experiences under your belt and are feeling a little more confident, you'll be able to set your sights on the next stage in your life journey - finding a job. New Zealand offers a host of different ways you can find work.



Online job sites - in New Zealand, SEEK is the number one job site when it comes for hunting for work. But there are plenty of other sites that incorporate job vacancies into their platforms, such as LinkedIn, Glassdoor and Indeed. If you're looking for a position in the public service, hit up Government departments to see what jobs they have listed, or head to the **New Zealand Government's Jobsearch page**.

Build your own - not feeling the love from any of the usual job-seeking avenues? Then it might be time to take matters into your own hands. These days, more and more people are customising their job to suit their own unique set of skills and life experiences. Many of them end up outsourcing themselves as freelancers to larger companies, or starting up their own businesses. Thanks to COVID, working from home has never been so popular, and if your job revolves around being on a laptop, then the world really is your oyster!



KNOW THE VALUE YOU CONTRIBUTE

+ The power of your personal brand, how you communicate, your ability to adapt and self-leadership

What makes you the unique person that you are? It takes courage to move to a foreign country. The experience you have lived so far, the rollercoaster of emotions, high and low points are all character building. The total of your experiences in your home country and in New Zealand have transformed you into the well-rounded, compassionate, hard working and tolerant person that you are today.

Certainly, moving to New Zealand has made you adaptable, resilient, and at times, forced you think on your feet. Being from another culture and understanding diversity is a huge benefit for any work environment, you will provide another perspective and potentially provide technical skills that may be more superior than your Australian colleagues.

Here are a bunch of ways you can become more confident and expand your life experiences.





To be able to share the wonderful value that you bring, first you must understand and appreciate your own value.



Show them the money

Want to know what a company's bottom line is? Money. Any business who employs staff wants to know what return on investment (ROI) they get with their people. Showing them that you manage your time and skills (and their resources) at work efficiently and effectively is bound to make you a gold star employee in no time.

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Working autonomously shows a boss that you have **initiative**



Get clued in

What's a sure-fire way to show your boss that you're as keen as mustard (without coming across as too in-your-face)? Get to know the business. Show them you mean business - by understanding the inner-workings of theirs. Study the website, and not just the department or section that applies to you. All of it. Learn who the other employees are that work there, what they do, and where they sit. If the company releases an annual report, read it (especially the financials). Fully immerse yourself in the company's backend, and use this knowledge to shine when the next opportunity arises.





The value of the lone wolf

When it comes to value, the ability to work well autonomously (i.e. without supervision) speaks volumes to an employer. Working autonomously shows a boss that you have initiative, the good sense to make decisions by yourself, and that you don't need to be managed or supervised (saving your boss time). It also shows you have a decent level of maturity and are accomplished enough to get the job done. In turn, this level of hands-off self-management builds trust that you can be relied upon and that you'll meet work deadlines.

In time, the trust may build to such a point that you may even be given the opportunity to work from home on occasion. Now that's value.

Roll with the punches

Living away from your home country and being away from family, friends and culture can bring with it a whole rollercoaster of emotions. But both the good and the bad outcomes of this experience are all helping to form your own life experiences and help shape the person you are.

Every experience that you have has value. Be proud of your journey so far, and believe in yourself. Even if you don't have all the answers right now, or you feel as though you haven't achieved much, know and trust that you're on the right path to do so.

And most importantly - enjoy the ride!

For more information about employment opportunities, visa applications and study applications, talk to your local IDP counsellors for assistance or [book an appointment today.](#)