



Creating a youth-friendly workplace

A guide for employers

RATO AKORANGA Ā ROHE

REAP
WAIRARAPA

Ako
AOTEAROA

Published by:

Ako Aotearoa
PO Box 756
Wellington 6140

www.ako.ac.nz

Date: October 2021



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

About this guide

This Guide has been developed from an Ako Aotearoa-funded project undertaken by REAP Wairarapa to investigate what supports young learners to be work-ready, and gain meaningful, sustained employment. Based on the feedback received from employers and young people, a key finding from the project was the powerful influence of a youth-friendly workplace on a young person's confidence and success as an employee.

Your guidance and support as an employer of young people can shape their attitude to work and their futures. We have created this Guide to provide you with a resource of suggestions, tools, and 'quick tips' on how to create a youth-friendly workplace and how you can support young people to become successful, contributing employees.

How to use this guide

This guide explains:

- The young employee's characteristics.
- What a youth-friendly workplace looks like.
- The best practices of a youth-friendly employer.
- How you as an employer can support the young employee on the job.
- The young employee's responsibilities.
- Tips and tools for how you can create a youth-friendly workplace.

*There is also a checklist to help determine whether you offer a youth-friendly workplace.

Supporting the young employee on the job



- Make time to get to know the young person – what motivates them, what their interests are.
- Be specific with requirements of the job when the young person applies. For example, hours and days of work, driver's licence.
- Provide on-job and ongoing professional development training.
- Create a culture where it is okay to ask questions.

- Give a clear message about your company's values and ways in which your young person can contribute to the success of the business.
- Encourage career development.
- Enable the young person to work in teams with other employees.
- Explain what an employee should do if they're unwell and can't come to work.
- Ensure they are properly trained in health and safety requirements and know what to do to prevent harmful incidents in the workplace.
- Give them responsibility and authority to accomplish results.
- Ask for their opinion and provide opportunities for them to contribute their ideas.

Other activities that support the young employee

- Set them up with a buddy when they first start.
- Provide induction so that they 'learn the ropes' early.
- Provide work experience that gives them opportunities to acquire skills (work-related and soft skills such as communication).
- Assist with developing their time-management and decision-making skills.
- Involve them in interesting projects.
- Give them cross-training opportunities versus a repetitive job role.



The young employee's view of a youth-friendly workplace

- Involvement in good projects. Young people accept that bottom-rung work is necessary but that this is not the whole job.
- Training. This does not have to be expensive. Young people place enormous value on mentoring which can be provided within the company.
- Feedback. Young people appreciate constant, structured feedback.
- An interesting and challenging job.
- Cross-training opportunities versus a repetitive job role.
- Their employer takes a personal interest in them.
- Fairness.
- An employer who does not micro-manage.
- Feeling a sense of accomplishment.
- Good technology.
- Asked for their opinion on a frequent basis.
- Given responsibility and authority to accomplish results.
- Being treated the same as other employees.
- Having fun at work.

The young employee's role and responsibilities

- Ask questions when they don't know what is expected or what to do.
- Ask for, and respond to, feedback.
- Get to work on time.
- Take reasonable care of their health and safety and the safety of others.
- Follow reasonable instructions.

Tips and Tools

Tip #1 Induction

- Make your expectations clear right from the beginning.
- Set clear performance expectations of the job and other workplace activities and behaviours. For example, being part of a team. This helps prevent performance issues arising as your young employee understands what is expected of her/him and of the job.

Tip #2 Provide Workplace Mentoring

- Provide a supervisor or workplace mentor who can support the young employee when they start the job.
- The mentor helps to foster learning and competent workplace behaviours which are critical for the young employee's success.
- This mentoring might include advising them about appropriate work clothing, teaching phone etiquette, and helping them understand the demands of the workplace.
- The mentor is a person the young employee can confide in on workplace matters and their career aspirations.

Tip #4 Performance Management

- Care should be taken when addressing a young employee's performance, as they are likely to be less confident than other employees. You may need to spend more time with them to demonstrate or explain how they can improve their performance.
- Provide regular feedback that helps the young person make good decisions, solve problems, and carry out the job as required.
- Praise good performance.
- Set goals and a plan for developing and improving performance.

Tip #5 Training

There are a variety of ways you can train and support young employees.

This can include:

- A mentoring or buddy system
- Formal off-the-job training
- Job shadowing
- Demonstrations
- Training by observation
- Work experience which provides opportunities for skill acquisition
- Staff meetings
- Toolbox talks
- Using equipment manuals or websites
- Practice sessions

Checklist for Youth-Friendly Workplaces



Before your young employee starts

PRACTICE	YES	NO	ACTION
Give them a start date and time			
Give them information they will need to know <u>before</u> starting			
Get their contact details and give them yours and/or their supervisor's contact details			

When your young employee starts work

PRACTICE	YES	NO	ACTION
Provide information to them in a way that is appropriate, so they understand what is expected in terms of workplace behaviour, policies and procedures			
Give them a copy of their employment contract			
Introduce them to their workmates and supervisor and explain their roles.			
Recognise and be supportive of the special needs of young workers, including their study requirements if completing further education or training			
Provide young workers with safe systems of work, safe equipment, and proper training			
Provide appropriate training that takes into account their level of experience, skills and knowledge (may include lack of work experience)			



PO Box 756
Wellington 6140
W: www.ako.ac.nz
P: 0800MYAKONZ
E: info@ako.ac.nz

Ako
AOTEAROA