

# Industry Roundtable

FEBRUARY 2023



## Diversity and Inclusion

### The Challenge

Across the Professional Services, Law, Engineering and Transport, Government and Public Sector, and FMCG industries, a common challenge identified was that of diversity and inclusion. While diversity of employees is important from an ethical, and sometimes legal, standpoint, boasting a diverse team of employees is of extreme benefit to businesses. Looking at graduate recruitment specifically, having a diverse and inclusive workplace can serve to attract new talent. People often look to organisations they feel will fit with their core values, and seeing representation of multiple groups is a great way to include and attract new graduates. Beyond this, diversity also helps with employee retention, as people are more likely to stay, happily, in an environment where they are valued.

Despite the clear importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, all industries present at the roundtable event identified attracting these harder to reach groups as a challenge. For industries such as Engineering and Transport, which are largely male dominated industries, the challenge to attract and retain female graduates is prevalent. Across the other industries, attracting ethnically diverse candidates, such as Māori and Pacific grads, can pose the same difficulty.

### Potential Solutions

- Implementing specific graduate programmes/roles for these harder to reach groups of graduates. Examples of this include partnering with Tupu Toa, an entity that facilitates 12-week paid-internships for Māori and Pacific tertiary students, or Mainfreight's Women in Leadership programme.
- Engaging in outreach programmes to promote careers in your industry to your target diversity groups. Outreach programmes can take place at secondary and tertiary level, and similarly to the point above, may provide internships or scholarships to encourage students to consider a career in your industry.
- Particularly for industries in the STEM department, using gender-neutral language on job descriptions and recruitment is important to avoid potentially dissuading female applicants from undergoing the application process.
- Highlight the diversity that already exists within your organisation. Leaders who are part of the harder to reach groups you're targeting are extremely advantageous in the attraction stage of the recruitment process. If graduates see people whom they can relate to in leadership roles at your company, they are more likely to see themselves in your company environment.

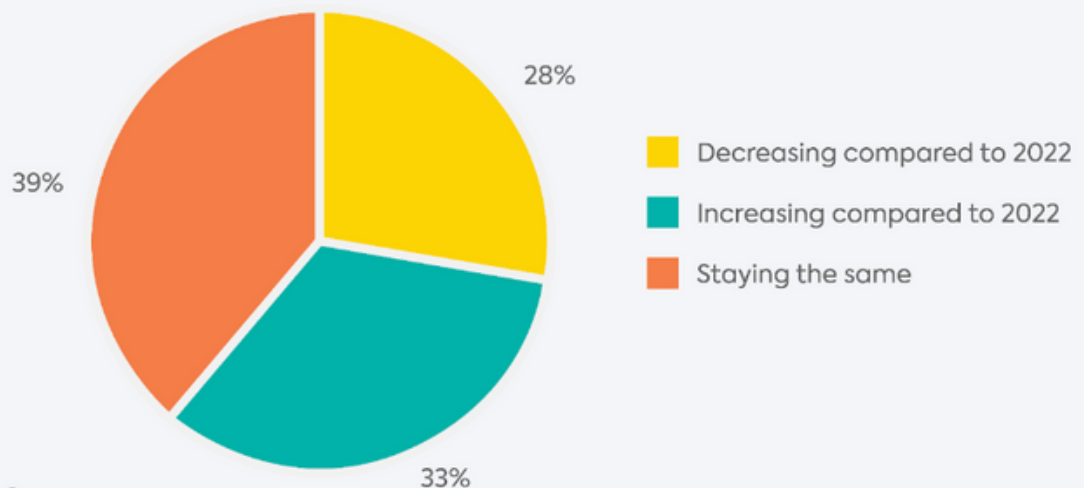
## Competition for Early Talent

### The Challenge

It is no secret that a top challenge for graduate recruiters across industries is the highly competitive nature of the graduate labour market. Largely a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, graduates have been facing major uncertainty regarding the economic climate and the state of the job market. As a result, many graduates have chosen to pursue further study and delay their graduation, or pursue alternative paths, instead of entering the traditional workforce. Also, with the current state of borders opening and less fear around being stuck away from New Zealand, the numbers of talent looking to move overseas post graduation is climbing.

This is a challenge across industries as it means there are less graduates applying, accepting, and ultimately filling, the roles organisations have available. Businesses in the FMCG industry in particular experienced record levels of offer declines in 2022, with the level of renege rates following a similar trajectory. Due to the extremely competitive nature of the graduate market, graduates were finding themselves often with multiple offers at the same time. This left many businesses offering the same role to their third or fourth choice of candidate. With 72% of responses in our roundtable poll, 'What are your predicted early talent recruitment numbers for 2023?' being the same as or greater than 2022, we can expect the same trends to follow this year.

### Early Talent recruitment numbers 2023



## Potential Solutions

- Building a strong employer brand. This can begin at secondary school level with presentations around what your brand does and who you are. Following this up with presentations at tertiary level ensures your brand has a lasting impression on early talent, and informs them of your company's culture, values, and opportunities for growth.
- Focus on retention of current employees, so the need for graduates isn't so high. Retaining middle-upper level employees is beneficial in a graduate context as well, as it means the organisational structure becomes less of an hourglass. Essentially, if more middle-upper level employees are retained, there are more people able to coach and train graduates. Better training and introductions into a business also contribute to retention levels in graduates, as feeling confident and included in a new workspace has a great impact on job enjoyment and productivity.
- Review your current graduate programme. In order to engage new talent and attract graduates to your programme over others, it is vital that your graduate opportunities are seen as valuable to potential candidates. Several representatives across industries who attended our roundtable event identified that in order to make their graduate programme front-of-mind for candidates, it may be time to review the current structure.
- Use targeted recruitment strategies! Particularly for the Professional Services and Law industries, identifying and attracting top talent is crucial. Leveraging social media, attending university career expos and events, and building relationships with university clubs and societies are all ways in which you can target the demographic of graduates you want to attract. (We can help with this!)

## What's on Next?

- Our next Industry Roundtable in June
- New Zealand/Australia Webinar on ChatGPT in March

Exact dates to be confirmed - keep an eye on our LinkedIn for details!

