Training and development

Staff training and development is fundamental to business growth. It can help sales, save staff hours, create more efficient production methods, improve technical systems and more.

Unfortunately it’s also something that’s often ignored by many small business owners because it is seen as too time consuming or expensive.

Learn about some of the options available for your staff to develop skills, as well as grow or improve your business.

Draw up a training plan and policy

With the right plan and policies in place, you’ll ensure that your company benefits from any training you or your staff complete.

Set out any company guidelines and requirements so your employees know what training you’ll consider and what requirements they’ll have to meet.

You can make rules like:

- training needs to be job-related for the company to pay for it
- if the training is useful to the company but not necessary to someone’s job, you’ll pay 50% of the course costs and they can pay the rest
- employees must pay you back if they don’t complete or pass the course.

Create a personal development plan for each employee. Identify their strengths and weaknesses, and take into account the way they like to learn.

Review what you’ve agreed with your employees at least once a year to evaluate progress. When employees complete any training, discuss how their learning will be put into action.

If a customer complains, help your staff know when to take action themselves, and when to call in someone more senior.

Training options for your employees

There are plenty of options to help your employees gain or improve skills. Some of the more common ones include:

- off-the-shelf training courses — one-size-fits-all courses run by training companies, e.g. a generic course on customer service
- in-house training — usually done on the job, by a more experienced employee. Employees can learn at their own pace and apply new knowledge immediately
- job shadowing — involves one employee following another employee, like a shadow, to learn all the aspects of a job
- conferences, seminars, workshops and courses
- online courses — a cost-effective way of introducing new ideas and approaches. Especially useful when you need to train a large number of staff across different locations, e.g. to demonstrate compliance with health
Help with literacy and communication

Research shows that nearly half the New Zealand workforce has problems in reading, maths and communication skills – creating stress, frustration and often poor performance at work.

Literacy and numeracy pie charts


Vote Form
Do you know all employees need a written employment agreement?

- Yes
- No

Vote

Training for business owners

There are lots of free workshops and seminars available to small business owners. It’s also worth considering finding a mentor.

Workshops and seminars

Your industry body and local Chamber of Commerce (external link) (http://www.newzealandchambers.co.nz/) will be good places to ask if there are any relevant workshops and seminars coming up.

Check out:

- Inland Revenue’s free tax seminars and workshops (external link) (http://www.ird.govt.nz/contact-us/seminars/) — held throughout the country
- the New Zealand Institute of Management’s events (external link) (http://www.imnz.co.nz/events/cat-7-events/).

Courses and training

Other useful resources include:

- The Open Polytechnic (external link) (http://www.openpolytechnic.ac.nz/), which offers NZQA-approved courses in small business management
- polytechnics and training institutes
- the University of Auckland Business School (external link) (http://www.exec.auckland.ac.nz/), which offers short courses in business and management
- the University of Canterbury in Christchurch (external link) (http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/), which offers a range of short courses in leadership, communication and management
- your local Chamber of Commerce (external link) (http://www.newzealandchambers.co.nz/)
Self-assessment: Digital tools and how people use them

Online tools make many business tasks cheaper, more efficient, and more secure. They also allow us to work from anywhere and collaborate like never before.

Assess how well you’re using online tools for accessing business info, working together, accounting and HR, and backup and recovery. See how you rate and where you should focus.

At the end of this assessment you’ll get:

- a better idea of your strengths and weaknesses
- practical tips and links to expert advice.

5 - 10 minutes

Self assessment: Digital tools and how people use them

Get started

Keeping up to date

Did you know...

Two-thirds of small businesses would find it a major challenge to survive without wireless technology, according to a poll by AT&T, a major US tech company.

How well do you keep up to date with technology that could affect your business?

- Not at all — I’m in the dark and worry about the risk
- Not very well — I try, but I’m not sure how to get up-to-date info
- Quite well — I talk to others in my industry
- Very well — I watch out for news of risks and opportunities
- Extremely well — I plan ahead to make the most of new developments

Submit

Keeping up to date

Did you know...

Fibre-optic internet can be up to 100 times faster than other types of internet services, according to Stuff.co.nz.

Next
How actively do you stay up to date with internet connectivity options for your business?

- Not at all — we’ve never checked our options
- Not actively — we’re happy with our current setup
- Quite actively — we’ve compared packages and providers
- Very actively — we’ve changed to get the best fit (eg, fibre)
- Extremely actively — we know what’s coming next and whether we need it

Access to business info

Did you know...

Cloud-based file management can make people more productive, according to Harvard Business Review. Plus, it can provide a range of unexpected benefits, like easier collaboration.

Next

How easy is it to find the right files when you’re working?

- Hard — I lose files, or have to ask colleagues to email copies
- Not very easy — some files are organised well, but not all
- OK — I can find files eventually, but they’re badly organised
- Very easy — we have well-organised storage
- Extremely easy — we have well-organised storage accessible from anywhere

Access to business info

Did you know...

People today really value workplace flexibility and remote work because it allows them to focus their energies on work and life as opposed to commuting or other complications due to geography. — Ken Matos, Vice President of Research, Life Meets Work

Next

How well are you and others in your business set up to work remotely (eg, while travelling or at home)?

- Not at all — we can’t access anything offsite
- Not very well — we can access some systems (eg, email) offsite to some extent
- Quite well — we can access many systems and tools offsite
- Very well — we can access most systems and tools anywhere
- Extremely well — we can work equally well anywhere

Working together

Did you know...
Cloud computing is helping smaller businesses compete with bigger businesses by cutting the costs of hiring IT staff and maintaining servers and hardware, according to Harvard Business Review.

What type of project management tools does your business use to plan and keep track of large pieces of work?

- None — we do it without any special tools
- Standard office software tools such as spreadsheets
- Software written for my business
- Installed specialist software for project management
- Online (cloud-based) software

Submit

Working together

Did you know...

One of cloud computing’s greatest successes is to allow people to work together in ways that weren’t previously possible, according to Harvard Business Review.

How much does your business use collaboration tools to work with staff and customers, eg instant messaging and document sharing?

- Not at all — we don’t use any tools for collaboration
- A little — we collaborate using standard tools like email and phone
- Sometimes — eg, we collaborate within documents
- Quite a lot — eg, we use instant chat and video calling
- Lots — we have a full suite of cloud-based collaboration tools

Submit

Accounting and HR

Did you know...

Cloud accounting helps to increase efficiency and streamline the way you manage your business, according to Xero, online accounting experts.

What type of accounting and finance tools does your business use?

- None — we do it without any special tools
- Not applicable — we use an accountant for everything
- Software written for my business
- Installed specialist software for accounting and finance
- Online (cloud-based) software

Submit

Accounting and HR
Did you know...

Recruiting online costs around 5% of recruiting through traditional methods, such as newspaper ads, according to Harvard Business Review. And the time savings can be equally as great.

Next

How much does your business use online recruitment to recruit staff?

- Not at all — we recruit offline, eg with posters or newspapers
- A little — eg we post vacancies on our website
- A fair amount — eg we use our website and social media to spread the word ourselves
- Lots — eg we use an online service to post jobs and receive CVs
- Heaps! — most of our recruitment process is online

Submit

Backup and recovery

Did you know...

Carrying around information on individual computers is unnecessary when it’s so quick and easy to connect to the cloud, according to Steve Jobs, founder of Apple.

Next

What type of backup tools does your business use?

- None — we don’t have any storage or backup systems
- Standard tools such as copying files manually to a backup disk
- Storing and copying files according to a plan or policy
- Installed specialist software, such as overnight backup to offsite storage
- Online (cloud-based) software

Submit

Backup and recovery

Did you know...

Research shows that better prepared organisations experience significantly fewer crises and are significantly more profitable. — Harvard Business Review

Next

How well prepared are your business's computer systems for a disaster?

- We haven’t really thought about it
- Not very well — our business would be seriously affected
- Quite well — we could get things running again with some effort
- Very well — we would get things running again without much impact
- Extremely well — our planning protects us in a disaster
Tell us about your business

Just one last step before your self-assessment results. So we can shape future tools and services around your needs, please tell us about your business size, location, age and industry.

Where is your business based? Please select...
Which of these best describes your industry? Please select...
How many employees do you have? Please select...
How old is your business? Please select...

Show my results

Mentoring

A mentor is someone you trust, and who you can consult for business advice and guidance to assist your business or professional development.

A mentor should:
- usually be someone outside your immediate team, or even someone from outside your company
- be a good listener, with the experience to suggest practical solutions
- set an example
- challenge your ideas.

Consider finding a mentor, and encourage senior employees to do the same.

Some business and industry associations that also offer training for small business owners include:

- Employers and Manufacturers Association (external link) (https://www.ema.co.nz/events/Pages/Home.aspx)
- NZ Marketing Association (external link) (http://www.marketing.org.nz/)
- New Zealand Manufacturers and Exporters Association (external link) (https://www.nzmea.org.nz/we-connect/events-and-training/)
- Manufacturing NZ (external link) (http://www.manufacturingnz.org.nz/)
- Retailers Association (external link) (http://www.retail.kiwi/)
- Tourism Industry Association New Zealand (external link) (http://www.tia.org.nz/)

For training on standard topics eg how to be an effective supervisor, health and safety etc you could combine with other local businesses to hire trainers, to reduce the training cost per head.

Key business dates in one calendar

This calendar will help you find a range of opportunities, training, general compliance dates, and related tasks from across Government quickly and easily. Over time, you will also find events from the private sector where they are related to what you do with Government.

Pulling everything in to one handy place will make it easier for you to identify and participate in events and opportunities that will support your business growth and help you to understand and meet your obligations.
Vote Form
Do you prefer to hire people who have NZQA-recognised business qualifications?
- Yes
- No

Vote

Vote Form
Do you think your business benefits from your employees having NZQA-recognised business qualifications?
- Yes
- No

Vote

Rating form

How helpful was this information?
Rate this
- 1 Star
- 2 Star
- 3 Star
- 4 Star
- 5 Star

Additional comments

Submit

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