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 staff to handle complaints (/risks-and-operations/dealing-with-customer-complaints/training-staff-to-handle-complaints/)
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 and safety regulations.

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/)
- your local Economic Development Agency (external link) (http://www.edanz.org.nz/category/members/).

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 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

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