



NEW ZEALAND
**EMPLOYMENT
MARKET REPORT**

BUSINESS SUPPORT

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Business Support

The Market

It was 'rinse and repeat' for the business support labour market in 2022; a feeling of more of the same patterns and challenges from the year before, though with minor regional differences. In Tāmaki Makaurau, business confidence tapered off as the year progressed and the narrative around impending recession grew louder. Whereas in contrast, in the Waikato during the same time period, there was increased hiring spend, with confidence steady and even showing an increase towards the end of year.

Sectors where hiring activity was at higher levels reflected the state of the nation. Following the peaks of COVID-19 in Aotearoa, recruitment across the medical sector continued to be active, including a high demand for administrative support staff. Similarly, as the construction industry continued to flourish in the first half of 2022, business support professionals with experience in this industry were highly sought after, and vacancy numbers were high. The property sector was an interesting case: as the housing market experienced some big fluctuations, so too did businesses' need for support staff, which showed a good deal of variation throughout last

year. Large corporates, retail support and FMCG were much more constant in their recruitment activity for support staff.

Low unemployment and a closed border at the start of 2022 meant that regardless of whether an industry had high or low demand, it was difficult to source 'perfect fit' candidates. This was also due in part to the continually changing profile of business support roles. Over the last three to four years we have seen the decline of specialism in this area. For example, it is increasingly rare for employers to hire for a sole receptionist position, or pure data entry role, and increasingly hard to find these candidates. Matching this decline, we have seen a rise in generalist, broad-responsibility support roles.

For those industries with seasonal fluctuations, for example, tourism, farming and hospitality, hiring has been particularly tough. The border reopening certainly did not result in an influx of candidates; it was more of a trickle. Working Holiday Visa holders are often the answer to temporary business support positions, but the number of job seekers in this category are still nowhere near pre-COVID volumes. Permanent hiring was the main focus for many Madison clients.

Employers

Continuing a trend evident over the last three years, employers looked to shape hybrid roles as a way to adequately resource support provision in their organisations. These positions encompass a variety of responsibilities, frequently across specialisations, and requiring multiple skill sets. For example, Personal Assistant with marketing, Admin Assistant plus accounts, Executive Assistant/Office Manager/Events. 'Variety' is the word that frequently appears in job adverts; however variety is not the drawback that it used to be. Candidates have become aware that businesses may use hybrid roles to 'spread the load' and the perception is that these jobs can be overly busy and stressful.

Another employer focus has been hiring for soft-skills, in addition to, or even in place of, the desired 'hard' skills and experience. Attitude, team or culture fit, commitment, loyalty, and reliability were frequently cited as top requirements. To combat the many associated costs of turnover, employers placed a high value on candidates with a history of 'decent' tenure and who looked likely to stay in the role.

In 2022 it was certainly tough for employers to find the business support they needed. To adjust to market conditions, what was required was adaptability: a willingness to shift expectations to what the market provides and to move faster—recruitment process times are still too slow to be assured of securing a new hire in a competitive market, where great candidates often have more than one option. Employers also needed to be willing to provide support and training for the right candidate, and to look inwards to develop a compelling offer—this is not just about remuneration.

We did see some great benefits offered, which often became the deciding factor for talent in this space. Examples include relocation expenses paid (unusual for support staff), wellness packages, working from home set-up-costs covered, remote work options and flexible start and end times. We also saw KiwiSaver contributions above the standard three percent, the offer of insurances, five weeks' annual leave, and providing free access to tools such as mental health apps.

Job Seekers

In the tight 2022 market, job seekers in this sector still held the balance of power. Talented candidates held off for exactly the 'right' offer, and were not hesitant about weighing up multiple offers and asking for more: both money and benefits. Overall, we found that candidates were realistic with salary expectations, while leaning towards the higher end of the range, there certainly were not outrageous demands. In 2022 there was more emphasis on the complete package, which is new for this sector. Hourly rates for temporary roles increased this year.

We now see fewer job seekers with a desire or willingness to take on multiple-responsibility, hybrid positions—even as employers create more of them.

Previously popular, the tide has turned, and the current view is that these types of jobs often grow too large to be comfortably undertaken by one person, and anecdotally, we have heard more job seekers saying 'no, that won't be good for my mental health'.

Candidates were very aware of economic conditions, and cost of living was front of mind. Resignations were not given lightly—moves were made for more money, for better benefits and perceived stability. Flexibility, specifically working from home, and opportunities for career progression, were also highly regarded. We have seen greater numbers of candidates expressing an interest in health benefits in all formats.

The Year Ahead

While economic markers, and softer consumer demand mean belt-tightening and cost cutting for Kiwi business, we nevertheless predict hiring activity for business support roles will continue at a steady pace. This will be necessary to maintain headcount, which is already at a fairly tight level in many organisations, in order to be adequately resourced for business-as-usual.

The result will be that candidate supply issues will endure. The struggle to recruit will remain for the next six to nine months at a minimum, though potentially an influx of Working Holiday Visa and other visa holders may positively impact next summer's seasonal demands.

The year ahead will also see the ongoing impact of technology and the phasing out of 'old fashioned' business support tasks. For example, reception, scanning and printing are increasingly automated, leading to fewer requirements for these skills. The demand for remote and partially work-from-home business support positions will continue its upward trajectory.

Top non-financial benefits for Business Support job seekers



Ongoing training & development



Flexible working options



Paid overtime

60%

of Business Support job seekers are considering moving to a new workplace in 2023/24



40%

of these, did not get a pay increase in 2022

Not getting a pay increase was the largest factor as to why job seekers are considering a move

Business Support Salary Guide

SALARY RANGE IN NZD \$'000s

ROLE	AUCKLAND		WELLINGTON		WAIKATO/BOP		WAIRARAPA		CHRISTCHURCH	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Executive Assistant	95	140	80	110	75	95	60	85	68	95
Personal Assistant	85	100	65	85	70	85	60	70	60	75
Office Manager	80	100	75	100	65	85	60	75	65	80
Project Coordinator	80	110	70	110	65	80	55	80	65	90
Events Coordinator	65	80	60	75	60	65	50	60	60	70
Facilities Coordinator	65	80	60	80	60	65	50	60	55	65
Sales Support	65	75	60	70	60	70	50	65	55	65
Team Administrator	68	80	60	75	60	65	50	60	55	65
Office Administrator	62	75	60	70	55	65	50	60	57	70
Receptionist	60	70	55	60	52	60	48	52	53	58
Data Entry/Database Admin	55	60	52	60	50	55	48	50	53	58

The rise of the Senior EA

In the past couple of years, we have increasingly encountered more EAs with 'Senior' as a part of their job title and have had several employers using 'Senior' to describe the level of EA experience required when hiring. Most common in government and large organisations, Senior EAs often have increased responsibilities ranging from supporting Chief Executives and Board Members to having multiple direct reports. The seniority and duties of the senior designation mean these positions are compensated in the top quartile of the EA salary range.



About Madison

Madison was established in 1998 and is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Accordant Group, New Zealand's largest recruitment company and the only in our industry to be listed on the NZX. We operate across seven key locations in Auckland Central, Auckland South East, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wairarapa, Wellington and Christchurch.

What We Do

Madison works across almost all industry sectors, with clients that range from small start-ups to global blue-chip corporates, large public sector and not-for-profit organisations. Our track record includes full-service recruitment covering temporary, permanent and contractor needs across the following sectors:

- Accounting, Banking, Finance and Insurance
- Business Support and Administration
- Business Transformation, Programme and Project Management
- Contact Centre and Customer Service
- Engineering
- Government and Policy
- Human Resources and Recruitment
- Industrial
- Marketing and Communications
- Procurement and Supply Chain
- Project and Volume
- Property and Construction
- Sales and Relationship Management

Within disciplines, we recruit for the full range of positions from entry-level through to executive appointments. Depending on our clients' needs, our recruiters will deliver an end-to-end solution or unbundle the recruitment process to supplement the expertise and resources you have in your organisation.

How We Do It

Because we have a broad focus, but we are staffed by specialist recruitment professionals, we're able to offer the combined benefits of breadth, reach and personalised, expert service. Collaboration, sharing, building a real relationship and true partnerships are what set us apart. Not only do we understand New Zealand, but we have been specifically built and grown for this market.

Support & Partnership

We offer specialist consulting services to support our client organisations' talent lifecycles. Some of the key services we deliver via workshop, training or coaching include:

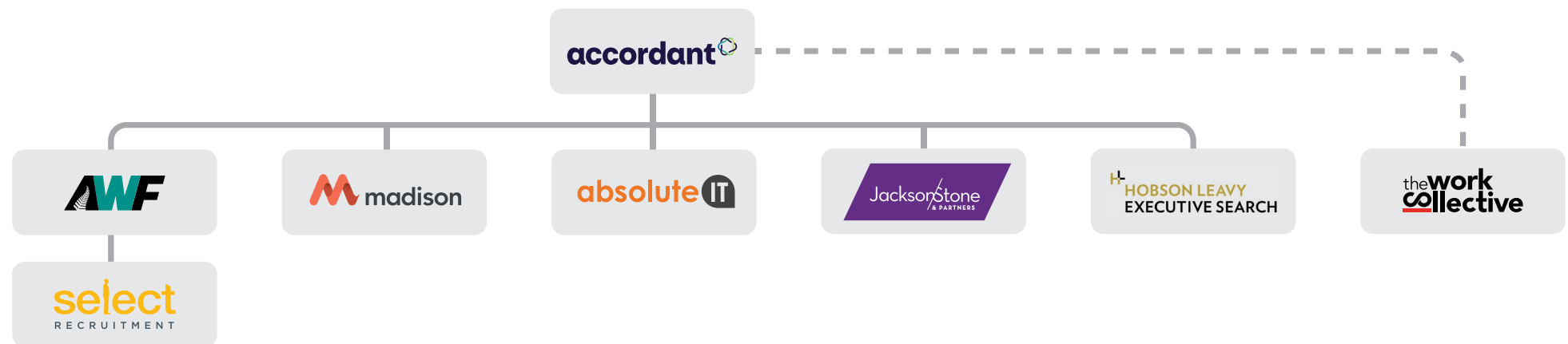
- Talent development
- Assessment centre design
- Outplacement services
- Psychometric profiling and skills testing
- High performance profiling



The Accordant Group

The Accordant Group is New Zealand's leading recruitment company and the only listed on the NZX. Within our stable we have five businesses, each of which holds an enviable position in their market, as well as The Work Collective, Accordant social employment initiative.

To find out more visit accordant.nz



Madison recruits temporary, contract and permanent staff for a broad range of clients in the commercial and government sectors.

JacksonStone & Partners is one of the most experienced executive search, recruitment and contracting agencies in New Zealand, covering all disciplines up to chief executive and board appointments across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

Absolute IT operates solely in the tech and digital market recruiting permanent and contract IT professionals.

Hobson Leavy is a retained executive search firm with an extensive track record in both the public and private sectors, successfully appointing some of New Zealand's most senior leaders at Board, CEO and Executive level.

AWF provides labour hire and recruitment services from 21 branches across the country including Select Recruitment in Dunedin.

The Work Collective is our social employment initiative, supported by each of our businesses, and focuses on helping people with barriers to employment find meaningful work opportunities.



To find out more about Madison and our services
you can visit our website or call us on **0508 MADISON.**

madison.co.nz

For queries about this report, please contact **Christian Brown** (General Manager) on **09 303 4455.**

AUCKLAND

09 303 4455

Level 6, 51 Shortland Street,
Auckland CBD, Auckland

AUCKLAND SOUTH EAST

09 271 1152

Level 1, Building 5,
The Crossing, 60 Highbrook Drive,
East Tamaki, Auckland

HAMILTON

07 839 5660

Level 5, 127 Alexandra Street,
Hamilton

TAURANGA

07 834 0834

By appointment only

WAIRARAPA

06 370 2400

441 Queen Street,
Kuripuni, Masterton

WELLINGTON

04 499 8055

Level 9, Cnr Customhouse Quay &
Johnston Street, Wellington

CHRISTCHURCH

03 366 6226

Floor 4, 77 Hereford Street,
Christchurch