



NEW ZEALAND  
**EMPLOYMENT  
MARKET REPORT**

CONTACT CENTRE

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# Contact Centre

## The Market

The size of New Zealand's contact centre market saw a slight overall decline in 2022, according to global research organisation IBISWorld, which was reflected in hiring activity. Business confidence, defined in terms of recruitment activity, was subdued in most locations. Yet, despite fewer vacant roles than in previous years, it remained difficult to hire, due to the extremely sparse candidate market. The exception was in the government sector, which was buoyant, with many open jobs and high volumes of activity. Repeating what we saw occurring in late 2021, government organisations were continuously focused on recruitment. This effort was needed in order to adequately resource the many contact centres dealing with the ongoing impacts of COVID, numerous legislative changes, and backlogs from previous years, for example, in passport processing.

The contact centre market has been especially impacted by border closures, but the reopening did not quite have the hoped for effect. At the point in time that the border opened, the candidate pool of active job seekers had been thoroughly exhausted, so we did see a small, temporary improvement in supply. However, changes in immigration requirements and the rising cost of living meant fewer international job seekers

applying for roles at the entry and mid-level. This was where a greater candidate supply was particularly needed.

New Zealand's economic conditions were felt strongly in this sector, where salaries and hourly wages are at the lower end of the scale. When considering a job paying minimum wage versus a job paying living wage, the salary difference would be the determining factor ensuring a job seeker would choose one employer over the other. Every dollar counts.

Likely because of these pressures, salaries rose in this sector in 2022. Employers had to stretch budgets, to meet expectations and be able to secure talent in a candidate-short market. We saw some noteworthy increases in salary ranges. For example, general Customer Service positions used to pay in the range of \$45-50k per annum, but are now consistently offering \$55-60k. However, while permanent salaries increased, temporary hourly rates remained at similar levels to 2021.

**\$56k** Average CSR salary  
**↑5%** increase from last year

## Employers

It has been a challenging few years of sourcing, and in a positive twist, during 2022 we saw increased adaptability and flexibility from employers. Highly motivated and keen to fill their vacant positions, employers were much more open to considering applicants from hospitality and retail backgrounds—not only those with office and phone experience. Once new employees were secured, in an effort to enhance engagement whilst also pragmatically covering bases, some organisations used a 'scatter training' approach, whereby new starts completed training in several different areas of the business. This was both useful to the organisation and appealing to job seekers.

Considering future mid and senior role vacancies, savvy employers took a long term view, hiring to bring in new starters at contact centre level, with crystal-clear pathways to promotion and progression clearly outlined for candidates. Those organisations with such visible career pathways used them to great effect during talent acquisition processes. This feature was seen as highly attractive to job seekers looking for a career and long-term stability.

We saw a significant increase and creative spin on the benefits offered as a part of the employment package. Some employers offered a Working From Home subsidy,

additional annual leave, mental health days, gym memberships, or a wellbeing allowance. There was an increase in training offerings, with funds committed to a wide variety of courses. We saw retention bonuses offered for six months tenure, and even public transport subsidies. These benefits were effective in swaying a job seeker towards accepting one offer over another, in a scenario where salaries for competing roles were at similar levels.

In Wellington and Christchurch, due to the volume of government contact centres, there was a significant proportion of temporary recruitment. Auckland leaned more towards permanent recruitment across the year, with headcount remaining stable.

The big wish list item for employers in this sector—wary from the churn of the last few years—was for candidates willing to commit to the role and organisation. The key driver of this was to increase the tenure of new hires, and limit the spiralling costs of turnover. It was tough recruiting in this space: response to advertisements that in previous years would have seen applicants in double or even triple figures, was patchy and sparse in 2022. Even pulling out all the stops, proactive sourcing applicants in the market did not yield the desired volume of applicants.

## Job Seekers

2022 was a candidate-driven market. With low unemployment, a closed border for part of the year and high volumes of advertised roles, there were simply fewer job seekers around, giving those candidates with industry skills and experience their pick of the jobs. Experienced Contact Centre professionals also had opportunities galore if they wished to make the transition out of the industry. We saw a fair amount of movement into administration and business support, when in previous years, making this type of move would not have been so straightforward. The Contact Centre environment can be tough, especially when the role involves listening to complaints, so we had some reports of job seekers wanting to focus on their mental health, and move out of the sector.

There has been some geographic movement of candidates due to economic conditions and lifestyle choices. Working from home options have made this possible and continue to be seen as highly desirable by job seekers. We regularly ask job seekers their reasons for looking for another job, and in 2022, a notable amount of movement was due to people wanting a work-from-home option, not offered by their current employer. Despite the rise in remote work, there are few 100 percent work-from-home opportunities, with the hybrid model being the most popular offering from employers who want to preserve a sense of organisational culture.



45%

of Contact Centre job seekers are considering moving to another role in 2023/24

## The Year Ahead

The salary range increases that we saw in 2022 will stabilise in 2023; employers simply do not have the budget to consistently compete. However, we do expect to see incremental increases for employees, via internal performance and salary review processes, in order to maintain desired retention levels.

When it comes to flexible working, the hybrid model is the approach that will be most evident in the next 12 months. Technological advancements certainly allow for this, as long as businesses and government agencies have the additional people and culture structures to support it. We are also expecting to see a continuation of the trend in supporting mental health, through provision of health-focused benefits, and internal programmes.

The news around the market supply of candidates is lukewarm rather than resoundingly positive. Recession in New Zealand may mean that people who might have otherwise contemplated a move, will sit tight. There are fewer potential candidates entering the Kiwi market via immigration channels in comparison to pre-COVID immigration when many work visa holders made up a larger portion of the candidate pool.

Overall, there will not be a bountiful supply of suitable, experienced candidates, and sourcing will remain challenging for many positions. However, employers will have other opportunities for talent acquisition success: career pathways and learning and development opportunities are highly attractive, as are the other benefits we are starting to see emerge such as more work from home options and flexible start times. Creative thinking about the complete package and offering will ensure recruitment success.

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**More training or career development opportunities**

is the top **non-financial reason** Contact Centre job seekers are looking for a new job

# Contact Centre Salary Guide

SALARY RANGE IN NZD \$'000s

ROLE	AUCKLAND		WELLINGTON		WAIKATO/BOP		WAIRARAPA		CHRISTCHURCH	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Contact Centre Manager/ Customer Service Manager/ Customer Service & Sales Manager	110	200	110	190	110	170	90	170	100	170
Team Leader	70	110	70	110	90	100	65	90	70	90
Trainer/Team Coach	70	95	60	90	80	90	65	75	65	75
Claims Consultant	55	80	55	78	60	70	50	65	55	65
Claims Manager/Senior Claims Consultant	80	95	75	90	65	75	62	75	65	78
Telephone Account Manager/Inside Sales	65	80	55	70	60	70	50	63	55	65
Retention Representative	60	70	55	65	55	65	50	60	50	60
Collections Officer	60	75	50	60	60	65	48	60	55	65
Lending Officer	55	65	55	65	60	65	50	55	50	55
Customer Service Representative - Inbound	55	65	52	60	50	58	49	55	55	60
Customer Service Representative - Outbound	52	65	50	60	55	65	49	55	55	60
Customer Service Representative - Home Based	55	60	50	60	50	55	49	55	55	60
Outbound Sales/Telesales Consultant	55	65	50	60	55	60	50	60	55	62
Workforce Manager	95	130	85	115	90	110	70	90	70	90
Workforce Planner/Scheduler	75	95	65	100	75	90	65	75	65	75



# 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:

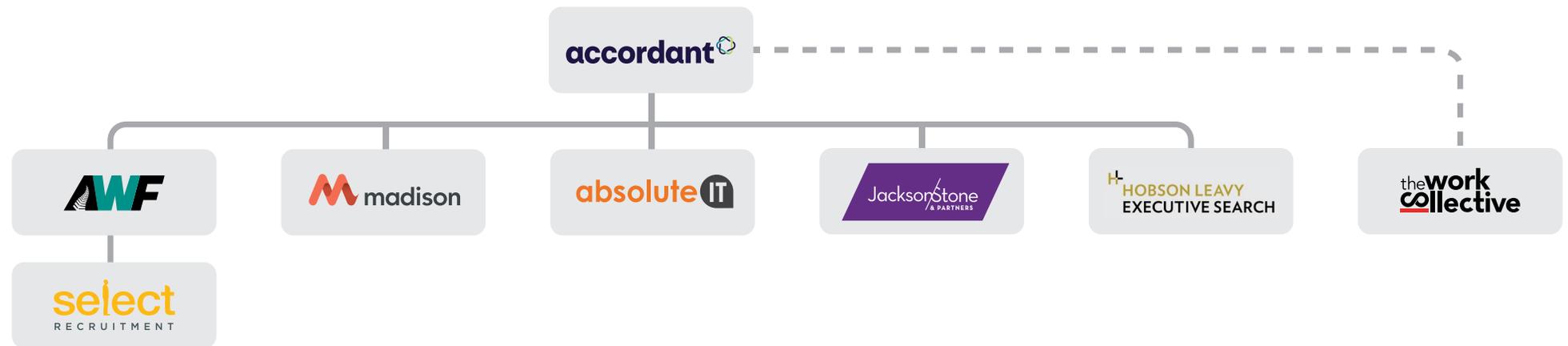
- Talent development
- Assessment centre design
- Outplacement services
- Psychometric profiling and skills testing
- High performance profiling



# 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](https://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