

NEW ZEALAND
**EMPLOYMENT
MARKET REPORT 2024**

CONTACT CENTRE

Contact Centre

The Market

The contact centre industry began 2023 with a decent amount of recruitment activity but this tapered off as the year progressed due to election uncertainties, a change in government, and the economic slowdown. One significant economic factor of the year was the increase in the Living Wage to \$26 per hour in September, which employers were slow to adopt, particularly in the temp space. Job seekers faced financial stress with many in early career roles with entry-level salaries. Many sought out jobs offering the best pay possible, stability and security.

Last year, the Auckland and Wellington markets faced challenges with several large companies restructuring and facing cost-cutting measures where internal recruitment teams were affected and the hiring processes for several contact centres were put on hold. Wellington endured a prolonged period of hiring freezes from the beginning of the year, and the hiring process did not resume as time went on.

In 2023, there were more permanent job opportunities than temporary or contract positions in the market. Many organisations preferred hybrid customer service and sales roles over traditionally separate customer service and sales positions. The insurance industry was one to buck the trend, with several companies expanding their frontline teams, in many cases in response to significant weather events and their impacts. Of note was the travel insurance sector, which experienced significant growth in customer teams as people started travelling more, both locally and internationally. Moreover, insurance companies expanded their presence in various markets and opened new centres in multiple regions.



50%

of Contact Centre Employers' organisations went through a restructure in 2023

Employers

In 2023, employers were seeking reliable employees who had a strong work ethic, were willing to learn, and demonstrated commitment. While experience in a contact centre environment was less critical than previous years, employers emphasised the need for soft skills and a strong customer focus. Basic to intermediate computer skills were considered essential hard skills. Employers gave more importance to general cognitive ability tests as they looked for transferable skills over experience. They were open to candidates from various backgrounds, including retail, hospitality, or recent tertiary graduates with a positive attitude. As a result, businesses were willing to provide structured on-site training to make up for any lack of experience.

In areas experiencing growth, employers were making more permanent appointments because of the candidate-short market. They were more open to pushing up the salary for a permanent candidate with good relevant experience. For instance, they would also stretch if the candidate had some specialised experience in insurance or finance. They also offered benefits, including discounted insurance perks and wellbeing days.

Flexible working for contact centre staff usually meant the ability to work from home for some days during the week. However, due to specific rosters for customer availability, there was no flexibility on working hours. Over the last year, some employers who historically had a fully remote contact centre workforce, attempted to shift to a hybrid working arrangement and bring their teams back to the office more often. While hybrid working is generally the favoured arrangement, in some pockets, they faced resistance to this change.

To facilitate the shift when hiring new employees, employers would provide clear and consistent guidelines regarding their office-based work policy, whether that was working in the office full-time or a hybrid working arrangement.



83%

of Contact Centre Employers offer work from home options for staff



Contact Centre

Job Seekers

Last year, candidate availability was a challenge for the industry. Many job seekers moved to administrative or coordinator roles for better pay and career opportunities. People embarking on their OE and those relocating for better cost of living and housing also impacted the availability of candidates.

Throughout the year, there was a noticeable lack of commitment among some job seekers during the recruitment process, especially in areas with lower candidate availability. With plenty of job opportunities available, job seekers could drop out of the recruitment process for a role that offered a higher salary or better benefits. We saw instances where candidates didn't complete the interview process as they applied for multiple jobs simultaneously. If they didn't hear back from a potential employer within a few days, or if the hiring process was too long or complicated, they would move on to another job prospect.

While remuneration remained the top priority for job seekers last year, they were also realistic about their salary expectations. Apart from pay, development opportunities and

company culture are factors that job seekers consider while evaluating a potential employer. Flexibility, growth opportunities, and a convenient location close to home are also highly valued. Moreover, some job seekers may be interested in making a career change and are looking for a role that can support them in that transition and offer future opportunities within an organisation.

Top benefits Contact Centre Job Seekers want



1st
Ongoing training & development



2nd
Career development opportunities



3rd
Paid overtime

The Year Ahead

In 2024, we are seeing more business confidence under the new government. However, we expect to see more reshuffling and restructuring, particularly in government services. Contact centre salaries are expected to increase this year due to the Living Wage and minimum wage increases. Regular annual reviews are also likely, which will result in pay rises.

Hiring conditions are expected to stabilise as we learn more about the new government's priorities. In Christchurch, areas of growth are being seen where large companies based in Auckland and Wellington are expanding or opening a regional office in the South Island.

Regarding technology, contact centre employers will look at how automation and humans can work together and seek to hire people with excellent technical skills. We anticipate a more comprehensive range of testing in 2024, with some clients utilising contact centre scenario inventory assessments to evaluate who can perform the job during the interview process.

As candidate shortages continue this year, especially for those with strong soft skills, we expect employers to remain open to candidates from different sector backgrounds with transferable skills. Our advice to employers this year is to have better lead times before starting recruitment drives, resulting in larger high-quality candidate pools.



71%
of Contact Centre Employers expect their workforce to increase or stay the same size in 2024



65%
of Contact Centre Job Seekers expect to receive a job offer within 2 weeks of applying

Contact Centre Salary Guide

ROLE	AUCKLAND		WELLINGTON		WAIKATO & BAY OF PLENTY		LOWER NORTH ISLAND		CHRISTCHURCH	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Contact Centre Manager/Customer Service Manager/ Customer Service & Sales Manager	115	200	110	190	110	170	80	140	110	180
Team Leader	65	100	70	110	75	100	70	90	75	95
Trainer/Team Coach	65	95	60	90	80	90	70	80	65	75
Workforce Manager	95	130	85	115	95	125	70	90	80	95
Workforce Planner/Scheduler	75	95	65	100	80	95	70	90	75	85
Claims Manager/Senior Claims Consultant	80	110	75	90	65	75	60	70	65	78
Claims Consultant	62	85	58	78	65	75	50	65	60	65
Outbound Sales/Telesales Consultant	60	70	55	60	60	65	50	60	57	65
Telephone Account Manager/Inside Sales	68	85	60	70	60	70	50	70	60	68
Retention Representative	60	70	56	65	55	65	50	60	55	60
Collections Officer	62	75	55	60	60	65	50	65	60	70
Lending Officer	60	70	55	65	60	65	50	65	55	60
Customer Service Representative - Inbound	52	65	55	60	50	58	50	60	57	60
Customer Service Representative - Outbound	50	65	52	60	55	65	50	60	57	60
Customer Service Representative - Home Based	52	60	50	60	50	55	50	60	57	60

Salary range in NZD \$'000s



About Madison

Madison was established in 1998 and is part of the Accordant Group, the only New Zealand recruitment company listed on the NZX. We operate across seven key locations in Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wairarapa, Manawatū-Whanganui, 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 these 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 & skills testing
- High performance profiling

The Accordant Group

Delivering recruitment, resourcing and people solutions across New Zealand

Madison is part of the Accordant Group, which is the only staffing provider listed on the NZX. The Group comprises five businesses: Absolute IT, AWF, Hobson Leavy, JacksonStone & Partners and Madison Recruitment. Accordant Group's capability spans all levels and aspects of commercial and industrial recruitment services, including permanent roles, temporary assignments and contractor placements. In addition to this, in 2019 Accordant established The Work Collective, a social employment initiative.

To find out more, visit accordant.nz

Absolute IT is a specialist agency that operates solely in the tech and digital market, recruiting permanent and contract IT professionals.

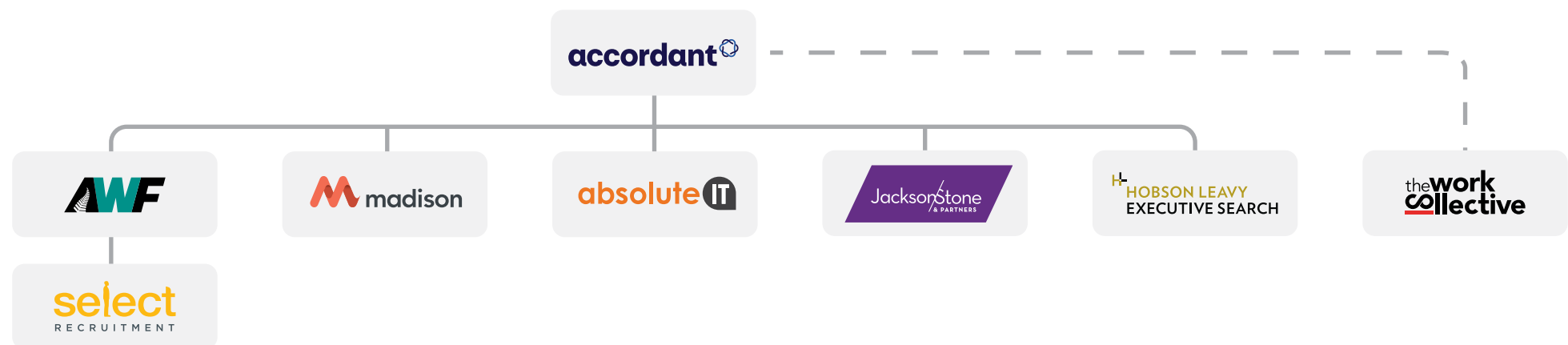
AWF provides labour hire and recruitment services from 21 branches across the country including Select Recruitment in Dunedin.

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.

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.

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

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



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AUCKLAND SOUTH EAST

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The Crossing, 60 Highbrook Drive,
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HAMILTON

07 839 5660

Level 5, 127 Alexandra Street,
Hamilton

TAURANGA

07 834 0834

By appointment only

WAIRARAPA

06 370 2400

By appointment only

WELLINGTON

04 499 8055

Level 9, Cnr Customhouse Quay &
Johnston Street, Wellington

CHRISTCHURCH

03 366 6226

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Christchurch

madison.co.nz

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

For queries about this report, please contact **Christian Brown** (Chief Operating Officer) on **09 303 4455**.

