



EMPLOYER TOOLKIT

Mentorship and Coaching

employertoolkitnz.org



Disclaimer

This document should be read with the following considerations in mind.

- **Timeliness of Information:** The information presented reflects the state of knowledge and industry standards at the time of publication. As the sector evolves, some information may become outdated or require revisions.
- **Intended Audience:** This toolkit is designed specifically for employers (business owners, supervisors, and managers) in the food and fibre sector. We recognise that while some content may be highly relevant to your work, other sections may not apply to your specific circumstances.
- **Introduction to Te Ao Māori Concepts:** The information and concepts presented provide a foundational understanding of te ao Māori. This toolkit serves as an introductory guide, and we encourage you to continue your educational journey, as understanding these concepts is an ongoing process.
- **Diversity and Inclusivity:** We acknowledge the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs of employees within the sector. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, and it's important to consider this diversity when applying the information in this toolkit.
- **Remuneration:** While the topic of remuneration is very important, it is not addressed in detail within this toolkit.
- **Legal Disclaimer:** The content of this toolkit is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. For legal matters, please seek the guidance of a qualified legal professional.
- **Additional Assistance:** If you require further assistance or specialised support, please consult the recommended formal resources provided in this toolkit.

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References to external sites are provided throughout the toolkit to support the reader with additional resources that may be more detailed, contextual, or live. While care has been taken to review these, we do not endorse nor bear any liability for the content or accuracy of these external sites.

Access more chapters

Visit the Employer Toolkit website for free and simple information spanning the entire employee lifecycle. There are 4 downloadable chapters available in PDF form, including:

- **Attracting the Right Individuals** – How do I hire and onboard new employees so they stay for longer?
- **Māori Cultural Confidence** – How do I grow my understanding of Māori experiences in the workplace?
- **Workplace Wellbeing and Culture** – How can I create a positive environment that boosts job satisfaction?
- **Mentorship and Coaching** – How do I support employees in their growth journey?

Mentorship and Coaching

How do I support employees in their growth journey?

Mentoring and coaching are vital tools in the employment relationship, particularly in the food and fibre sector.

- The relationship is between a more experienced person and a less experienced person, where guidance and support is given for the purpose of personal development.
- This relationship is mutually beneficial, with both parties free to ask questions and learn from each other.
- By fostering these connections, mentoring and coaching help to create a more satisfied workplace culture where everyone feels valued and encouraged to grow.

Mentoring and coaching can be an informal approach to training and development. For more details on informal training and development, see our website.

These methods also share similarities with a buddy system, which is discussed further in chapter 3, Workplace Wellbeing and Coaching.

What is the difference between a mentor and coach?

Below defines the 'classic' style of mentoring and coaching. It also outlines what role buddies play in the workplace.

Mentoring and coaching can be provided to someone by the same person but they take different views and approaches to achieve different objectives as outlined below. It is more common for mentors to be found outside of a workplace (external) than coaches. It will depend on the individual situation as to what set-up is most appropriate.

Mentor

What does it achieve

Focuses on long-term career development, goal setting, and personal growth through supporting someone's career journey usually across a medium-long period of time in an industry.

It focuses on career networks, sharing similar experiences, and providing guidance on longer-term career pathways.

Key activities

Mentors listen, share their insights, and help mentees navigate their career paths. They connect the mentee with resources including experiences or networks.

Who

Involves a more experienced person providing advice, guidance, and support to a less experienced team member. Often from outside of the organisation.

Pros

- Long term focus.
- Personal growth.
- May have infrequent check-ins.
- Can be as part of a formal programme.

Cons

- Time intensive.
- Can be unstructured.
- Mentee can sometimes have solutions given to them and not think through independently.



Coach

What does it achieve

Interactive process where the coach uses questioning and active listening to help the coachee find their own solutions and 'a-ha' moments.

It focuses on improving specific skills, performance, and achieving short-term goals.

Key activities

Coaches guide individuals to set clear goals, develop action plans, and stay accountable.

Who

Involves a senior person from within the organisation.

Pros

- Regular check-ins.
- Structured approach.
- Skill improvement.
- Personalised feedback.
- Frequent check-ins.
- Encourages independent thinking and confidence.

Cons

- Short term focus
- Relies on coachee to work problems through for themselves

Buddy

What does it achieve

A buddy system is a simple and effective way to support new employees as they settle into their roles throughout their first few weeks or months on the job.

Key activities

Answers questions, introducing the new team member to others, and sharing tips on workplace practices to help them settle in.

Who

Someone similar in age / work experience (two to five years).

Pros

- Provides immediate support.
- Eases transition into work.
- Peer connection.

Cons

- Limited in ability to support with some issues
- Temporary
- New employee may become over reliant, hindering their independence

Understanding tuakana and teina (Māori mentoring / coaching concept)

Learning is a shared journey, often involving many parties. This is no different in te ao Māori. The term *tuakana* can be understood as an older sibling, and *teina* can be understood as the younger sibling. In the context of mentoring and coaching, the relationship between tuakana and teina can be understood as a more senior experienced individual (tuakana) supporting a younger less experienced individual (teina) to learn and grow. In many cases this relationship can lead to mutual learning.

This gradual, mutual learning process is known as 'ako' in te ao Māori, and it includes the dual roles found in the tuakana-teina relationship. The aim is to help learners feel a sense of belonging in their learning environment and to provide any additional support they might need. This relationship goes both ways and is voluntary, with both parties learning from each other, rather than being driven by monetary value.

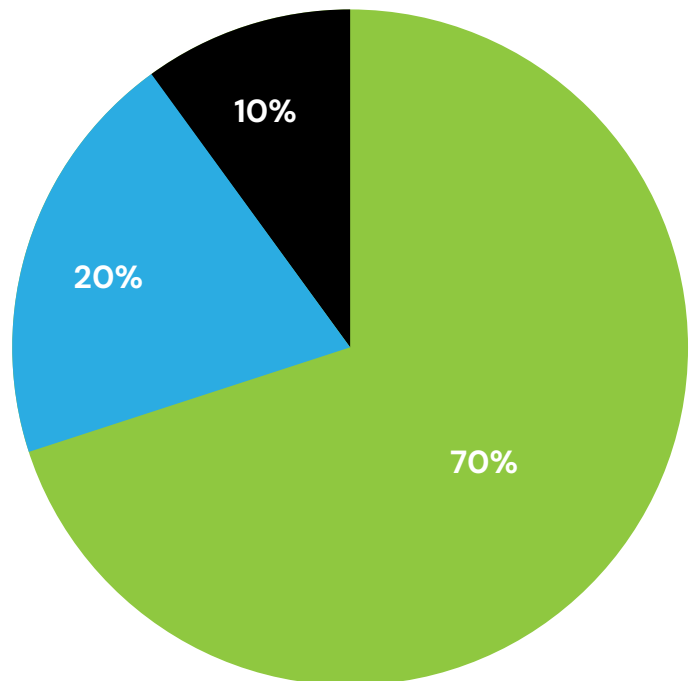
This dynamic is context specific, for example in your workplace the mentor may represent the tuakana and a new hire may represent the teina. But in a different situation this relationship may change. For example, in a cultural environment the new hire may actually be the tuakana, and the mentor may be the teina. This is something to be aware of.





How People Learn

The 70:20:10 rule provides a useful rule of thumb for understanding how people learn and develop:



Self-development

On the job experience



Guided development

Mentoring & coaching in the workplace / colleagues & friends



Structured development

Extracurricular training / course work



What is the value of mentoring and coaching?

Mentoring and coaching is important for the following reasons.

1. **Enhanced performance:** Mentoring and coaching improves employee performance by providing guidance, support, and feedback that they need.
2. **Increased retention:** When your employee feels supported and can see clear paths for growth they are more likely to stick around.
3. **Improved confidence:** Regular chats with mentors and coaches can boost confidence and people skills, leading to better decision-making and leadership.
4. **Creating a positive culture:** A culture of mentoring and coaching encourages teamwork, respect, and trust, making your workplace a more supportive and productive place.

What are the key elements to good mentoring and coaching?

1. **Set practical goals:** Help your mentee set achievable goals using a goal-setting framework and provide long-term career guidance to foster overall professional growth.
2. **Listen and understand:** Listen patiently to understand your mentee's aspirations and regularly check in on their well-being and mental health.
3. **Share experience and advice:** Offer your insights and advice, even if you're not an expert, to provide an outside perspective that can help with skill development and navigating work-related challenges.
4. **Recommend resources:** Suggest useful tasks, books, events, podcasts, and blogs to help your mentee develop and enhance their skills.
5. **Encourage independence and confidence:** Inspire your mentee to tackle challenging goals, respect their confidentiality, and ensure they feel a sense of independence while offering support when needed.





How can I support my employee to find the right mentor / coach?

There are three options to consider when supporting your employee to find the right mentor / coach.



Tip Usually coaches are within the business and can be the line-manager. Mentors may be external.

- Is there someone suitable within the business?
 - Is this person experienced and have they mentored or coached before?
 - What support do they need to be a good mentor / coach?
 - Do they have the capacity to mentor and/or coach?
- If someone internal is unavailable, is there someone in your community or network who:
 - Is this person experienced mentoring others in the industry?
 - Does their experience align with areas your employee is looking to develop?
 - Are they willing to take on a new mentee?

- If the above are not feasible, or another mentor/coach is required then:
 - Could you support your employee to become involved in a professional or organised programme to gain mentorship? Examples include:
 - NZ Young Farmers Regional Mentor Teams
 - Agri-Women's Development Trust Generation Change Mentoring
 - Rural Leaders Programmes and various industry body programmes
 - Could you encourage them to network in different forums (such as local workshops, meetings, and conferences) to find a mentor?
 - Could you encourage them to seek out individual professional business mentors and coaches (paid).



Tip Encourage your employee to find potential mentors through channels available to them. This could include through social groups, via social media on Facebook or LinkedIn, through industry body channels, or through networking at conferences.

What steps can I (or others) follow to coach and/or mentor employees?

Coaching and mentoring can both follow a simple process. A useful tool is the The GROW Model which can be found on the MindTools website. GROW is easy to remember as it stands for Goal, Reality, Options, and Way Forward. It helps coaches and mentors work through with their coachee / mentee a logical process and the right questions to ask at each stage.

Think of it like planning a journey:

1. first, help your coachee/mentee decide where they want to go (the goal),
2. second, help them explore where they are now (their current reality),

3. then, explore different ways to get to the goal together (the options),
4. finally, make sure they're committed and ready to handle any obstacles along the way (the way forward).

While the process can be the same for both coaching and mentoring, as explained previously, coaching will take a more short-term and enabling approach.

Mentoring, on the other hand, will take a longer-term, career-focused approach with more support given by the mentor.

Task	Questions to ask
Create the Goal Ask your employee to create a SMART goal. SMART goals are a framework used to set clear, achievable objectives. The acronym stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your most important goals right now? Why are these goals important to you?
Look at your Reality Ask your employee to describe their present situation, this helps them to think about the solution to their problem/ goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What challenges or opportunities are you facing right now? What strengths do you bring to achieving these goals?
Explore the Options Together, determine what is possible for reaching an objective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What obstacles or challenges are you currently facing? What are you already doing to work towards your goal? How have you successfully overcome similar challenges in the past?
Establish the Will Ask your employee to commit to specific actions in order to move forward towards their goal, this helps to boost motivation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What resources or support do you need to succeed? How will you measure your progress towards your goals? What have you learned about yourself through this process? What will you do to maintain and build on your progress in the future? What specific actions will you take to move forward?

You can also see a Mentoring Programme rubric created by Food and Fibre CoVE which outlines a set of criteria to measure the level of vocational excellence achieved. It can be a helpful tool to see how you can improve your mentoring abilities.



What does good coaching and mentoring look like?

Below outlines two case studies for both mentoring and coaching. These highlight some of the common issues with coaching or mentoring and in contrast, the key good aspects of coaching and mentoring.

Mentor

Needs Addressing	
✗	Jordan, a senior farmer, is mentoring Brooklyn, a new farm assistant. However, Jordan rarely finds time to meet with Brooklyn and often cancels their scheduled sessions.
✗	When they do meet, Jordan tends to dominate the conversation, offering advice that is not always relevant to Brooklyn's interests in livestock management.
✗	Brooklyn feels frustrated and unsupported, and is unsure about their future within the business.

Excelling	
Darcy, a senior manager with over 20 years of experience in viticulture, is mentoring Charlie, a contractor from overseas.	
✓	Darcy regularly meets with Charlie to discuss their career goals and provides Charlie with valuable insights into the industry. Darcy helps Charlie set long-term career goals and offers advice on developing their skills.
✓	Charlie feels supported and inspired, and has successfully navigated several challenging projects thanks to Darcy's guidance.

Coach

Needs Addressing	
✓	Taylor, a coach, is working with Riley, a new employee on the orchard, on their time management skills.
✗	Taylor often provides generic advice without considering Riley's unique circumstances.
✗	Taylor doesn't follow up regularly, and Riley feels left to their own devices.
✗	As a result, Riley struggles to implement any meaningful changes, and their performance remains stagnant. Riley feels discouraged and doubts the effectiveness of the coaching process.

Excelling	
✓	Alex, a skilled coach, is working with Jesse, a dairy farm manager, to improve their herd management skills.
✓	Alex schedules regular sessions with Jesse, where she uses active listening to understand Jesse's concerns and challenges.
✓	Alex guides Jack in setting specific, achievable goals, such as improving milk production and cow health, and helps develop a clear action plan.
✓	Alex provides constructive feedback and encourages Jesse, leading to noticeable improvements in herd wellbeing and productivity. Jesse feels more confident and capable in their role.

Endnote

Thank you for taking the time to read our toolkit and for helping to uplift employee retention in the food and fibre sector.

In each chapter, you will have found practical advice and tips to help you keep your employees satisfied and committed to your business. Our guidance can assist you in:

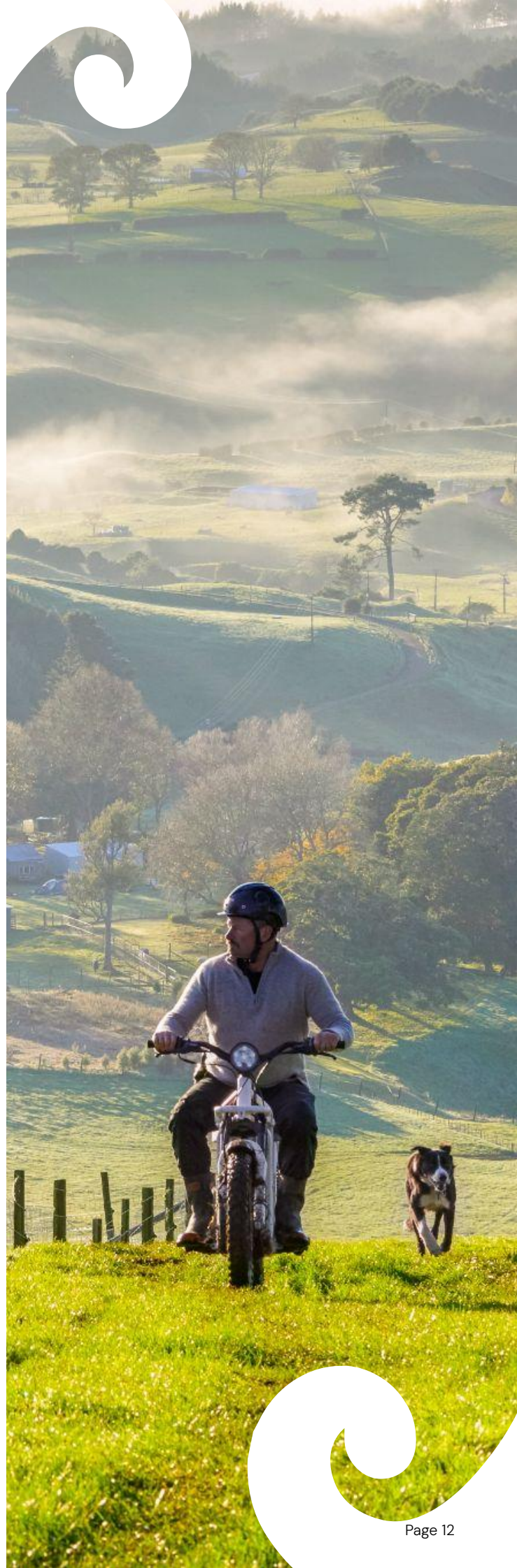
- Recruiting the right people from the start
- Embracing Māori culture and fostering a more inclusive and welcoming workplace
- Prioritising wellbeing and creating a positive work environment where employees feel valued and supported
- Effectively mentoring and coaching your workers to help them grow and succeed

By focusing on these key areas, we can create a workplace where everyone feels appreciated and motivated to do their best. Improving employee retention is not just a good idea—it is essential for the long-term success of your businesses and the overall health and productivity of our sector. Let's continue to invest in our workers and, in turn, secure a bright future for the food and fibre sector.



You can visit our website **employertoolkitnz.org** to find more information on:

- Understanding your obligations as an employer
- How to train and develop your people





Learner-Focused, Industry-Led,
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