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2021 Great North Road,
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Cover: Competitors from Paramount Services take on the 2024 Business Challenge.

With thanks to our partners ...



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From My Perspective

Phil Clode, Business Development Manager, phil@rosebankbusiness.co.nz



Welcome to the March edition of Roundabout

In this issue, we explore Rheem, a company that arrived in New Zealand in 1958 and have been a member of the RBA since our inception. Known

for manufacturing quality hot water cylinders, the company has a lot more to offer than consumers may realise, including boiling water units and cutting-edge solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and systems. Rheem is at the forefront of energy-efficient technology using heat pump technology to heat hot water.

Take a look at our working from home story on page 18 - is there really a push to get workers back to the office? Most businesses that have office workers are affected by remote working; our writer Beth takes a dive into this new way of working and its outcomes.

We also have coverage of the 2024 Business Challenge on page 14. I want to thank Kim Watts for her hard work putting on the event. As you might imagine, it is never easy organising events, and this one was put together with precision. One hundred and thirty Rosebank workers showed up to have



fun in the sun, and it was great seeing everyone's smiling faces.

I hope you keep fighting the fight and that 2024 will move into a more positive space for the business and country.

Regards,
Phil Clode,
Business Development Manager

Kimmy's Korner

Kim Watts RBA Executive Engagement Manager
Phone: 021 639 509, kim@rosebankbusiness.co.nz



Safeguard Your Plates, Protect Your Vehicle

The RBA has teamed up with Matrix Security to offer a free service on Thursday, March 7 that replaces the standard screws on your vehicle's number plates with anti-theft screws. The swap is a quick fix that will take about five minutes of your time.

Why are anti-theft screws important?

With increases in crime, an often overlooked aspect of vehicle security is license plate protection. License plate theft is a prevalent crime that, while it won't result in any legal issues for the owner, presents significant risks, including vehicle identity theft and involvement in criminal activities. It is important to report such thefts to the police and use anti-theft screws as a simple,

direct, and effective deterrent.

These specialised screws feature unique heads that require specific tools for removal. This significantly complicates attempted thefts by making their removal time-consuming and noisy, which enhances the likelihood of detection. Criminals are less inclined to target vehicles equipped with these screws, opting for easier targets instead. Consequently, investing in anti-theft screws not only protects your own property, but also contributes to reducing vehicle-related crimes in the wider community.

In essence, anti-theft screws represent a small yet impactful step toward strengthening vehicle security and mitigating the risks associated with license plate theft. By proactively taking measures to prevent license plate theft, vehicle owners can enjoy greater peace of mind, safeguard their assets, and contribute to fostering safer communities.

Contact kim@rosebankbusiness.co.nz to schedule your appointment for Thursday, March 7 between 12:00 and 1:30 pm.



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Rosebank Advocates

With **Dr Grant Hewison**, specialising in local government consultancy and legal services



Dr Grant Hewison

Feedback on Te Ara Hauāuru - Northwest Rapid Transit

In 2023, Waka Kotahi/NZTA asked communities to share their views to help plan better transport options for the growing northwest. The Rosebank Business Association was one of those submitters.

What was heard

Nearly 4,000 people completed the survey. The main suggestions were:

- Parking at rapid transit stations (21%): People mentioned the Northern Busway Park n Rides and concern about the frequency and reliability of connecting public transport services.
- More bus lanes on feeder routes (17%) to ensure connecting services are reliable and fast.
- Walking and cycling connections (9%) and supporting amenities or services like secure bike and scooter parking, and/or the ability to take bikes and scooters on buses.
- Well located stations (7%), including inner-city suburbs (ie St Lukes Road, Pt Chevalier) and making stations that are safe and comfortable (4%).
- Increasing frequency of services (2.7%) to and from rapid transit stations and along the corridor.

Feedback was given on where the congestion problems are, with suggestions to alleviate it, including:

- More lanes on SH16 North of Brigham Creek Road, at least to Kumeū.
- Bypasses and off/on ramps: Delivering the Kumeū bypass, the Northside Drive Bridge and on/off ramps at Squadron Drive.
- Improving intersections with SH16 (cited as places with long traffic delays). Coatesville Riverhead Highway and Brigham Creek Road were the most mentioned.
- Improving or widening feeder roads to accommodate more traffic, especially Te Atatū Road, Lincoln Road, Brigham Creek Road, Hobsonville Point Road, and the Coatesville-Riverhead Highway.

The main things people want considered when designing rapid transit along SH16 are:

- Expanding plans to destinations further north (11%) and

east (4%) - Speed and reliability were considered critical to making public transport attractive and compelling to use. Some people cited the Northern Busway as the ideal model to follow.

- Include existing rail (11.5%) and ferry (2%) in the plans - Some thought the opportunity to expand the existing rail network further north should not be overlooked, or that more bus feeder services to rail should be included to support more people using the rail line, especially with the new City Rail Link opening soon. Others suggested ferry services to the city given many communities' proximity to the harbour including: Herald Island, Greenhithe, Scott Point, Hobsonville, West Harbour and Te Atatū Peninsula.

- Delivering this project quickly (7%) - There is a desire to act quickly, especially with the huge development across the Northwest.

- Connectivity with the wider public transport network (4%) - Connecting to other rapid transit networks across the Auckland region was important, such as a link to the City Rail Link and establishing a connection between the North Shore/Albany and the northwest.

- Dedicated corridors for rapid transit (9%) - Some people cited the Northern Busway as the ideal model to follow when allocating or developing road space for the northwest rapid transit option.

- Futureproofing (4%) - People want assurance that the rapid transit system will be futureproofed to cater for growth and future technologies (please 'dig once').

- Reduce public transport fares so more people can use it (3%) - Some people felt that offering cheaper, affordable fares will be key to increasing public transport usage.

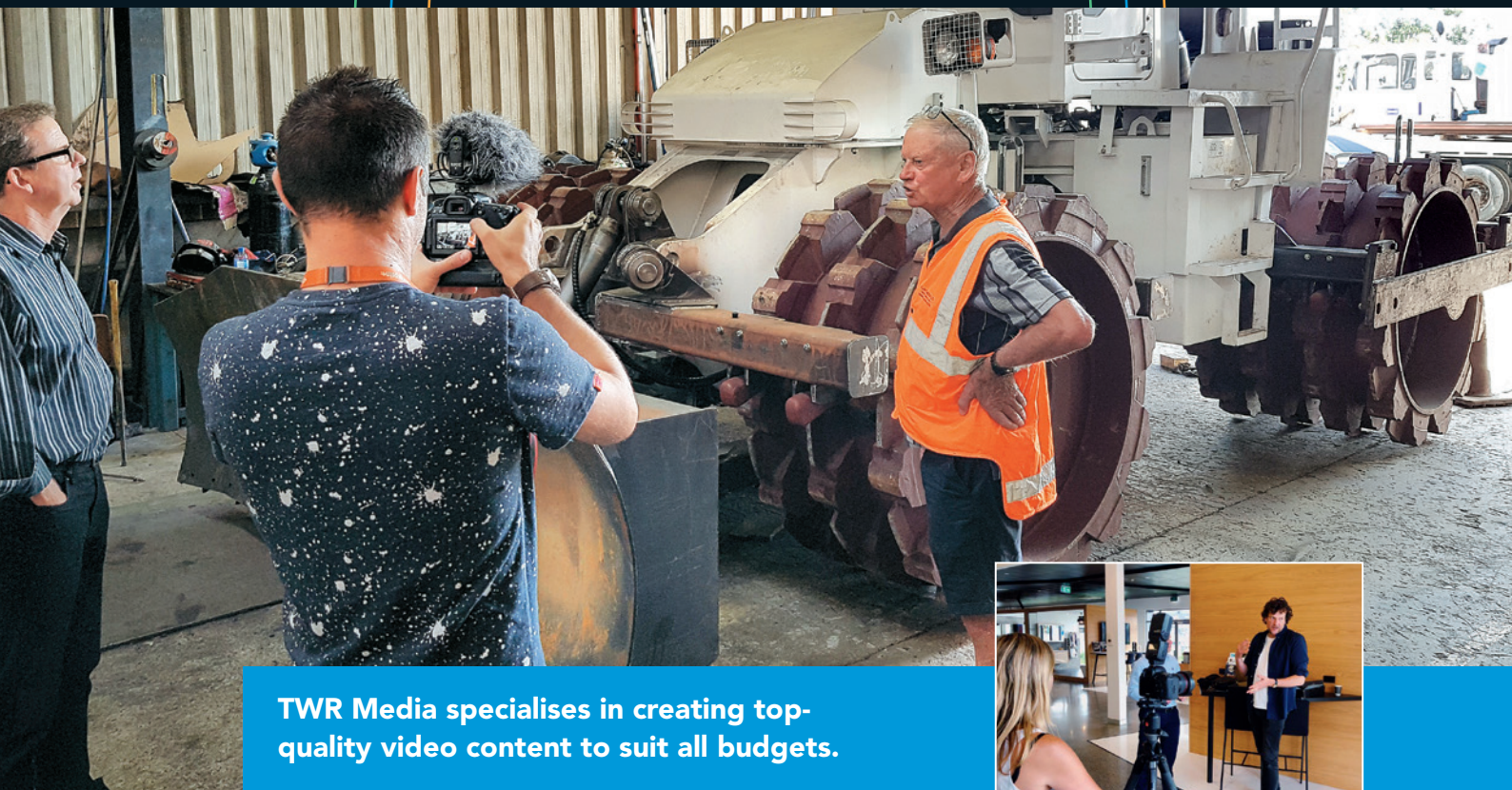
- Use the opportunity to upgrade the Northwestern Cycleway (2%) - leveraging the opportunities to improve the Northwestern Cycleway facility was recognised as a great opportunity, with many requesting more tunnel bypasses (like the bypass at Te Atatū motorway interchange). Some asked to extend the cycleway further north, as far as Kumeū and even Waimauku.

- Don't take away traffic lanes (2.5%) - Some people are concerned about any existing road prioritisation being taken away from general traffic.

- Think about cost (2%) - money needed to be spent wisely.

More recently, Waka Kotahi/NZTA has asked to meet with the Rosebank Business Association to discuss its submission.

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Rosebank News & Events

News, views and any other tidbits from the Rosebank Business Community.

Taxi Rosebank + Event

Save this date



Taxi Event

Where: Browne St Eatery, 50 Rosebank Rd
When: Thursday, 21st March, 2024
Time: 7.45am - 9.30am
RSVP: maureen@rosebankbusiness.co.nz

Suburbs Cricket New Lynn Hosting

Save this date



Suburbs
New Lynn
CRICKET CLUB

Suburbs Cricket Hosting

Where: 36 Binsted Road, New Lynn, Auckland
When: Thursday, 11th April, 2024
Time: 5.00pm - 7.30pm
RSVP: maureen@rosebankbusiness.co.nz

EMA Seminar with Ruth Bommoji

Save this date



EMA Seminar

Where: Browne St Eatery, 50 Rosebank Rd
When: Tuesday, 7th May, 2024
Time: 7.45am - 9.30am
RSVP: maureen@rosebankbusiness.co.nz

BAYLEYS Hosting

Save this date



BAYLEYS Hosting

Where: TBA
When: Thursday, 23rd May, 2024
Time: 5.00pm - 7.30pm
RSVP: maureen@rosebankbusiness.co.nz

Thanks From Christmas Past

Last Christmas seems a long time ago now but the team at Visionwest Community Trust wanted to send out a special thanks to Rosebank businesses and the Rosebank Business Association for your support of Christmas From The Heart 2023.

This was the fifth year Visionwest have run this event aimed at addressing Christmas hardship within West Auckland by providing essential food to help families through the Christmas period and to create a special Christmas Day meal. Where appropriate, gifts were provided for children who might otherwise have gone without.

In all, 878 families participated in Christmas From The Heart. This represents 4,094 people supported including 2,210 children who received Christmas gifts. The total value of food provided was \$237,080 which averages out to \$270 per family.

Here are a few comments from families who were supported through Christmas From The Heart and your generosity:

"This means a lot. We're struggling and trying to meet bills isn't easy. We just got told our rent is going up and the water bill is

going up. You're awesome and help us in so many ways."

"This makes a huge difference. I can't afford to buy gifts for my four kids but the help and support from Christmas From The Heart makes this Christmas the best Christmas for my whānau."

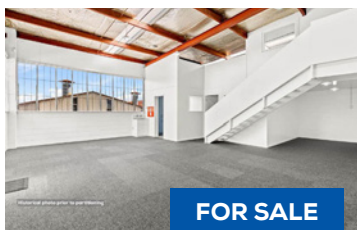
"This help means I can pay my power bills and Spark as well."

"Today was the first time in my life that I've felt special, I have no family in this world but now I feel there are people around me."



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Over \$275,000 donated annually to West Auckland schools, community groups and sports. We are the agency that keeps money local.



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Unit D/4010A Great North Road, Glen Eden

Motivated vendors want action on this conveniently located 123m² property with two car parks.

Colin Stewart

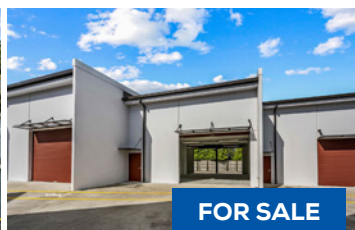


FOR SALE

14 Sunnyside Road, Sunnyvale

One Freehold site with two retail shops and two residential units with excellent exposure.

Max McCarthy



FOR SALE

Unit 21/8 Laurenson Road, Hobsonville

This 130m² industrial versatile unit is perfect for trade businesses, investors, or owner-occupiers.

Max McCarthy, Meir Alfassi



FOR SALE

14-18 View Road, Henderson

Multi-tenanted investment over six titles comprising a 4,242m² site with 1,390m² of total building area.

Meir Alfassi



FOR LEASE

26 Bancroft Crescent, Glendene

Heavy Industry zoned land with an 850m² yard and available immediately.

Max McCarthy

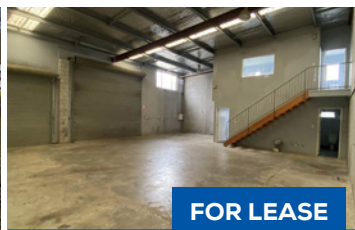


FOR LEASE

2 Patiki Road, Avondale

An exceptional opportunity to lease a 5,500m² yard, zoned Heavy Industry; this is a true rarity in the market.

Max McCarthy, Meir Alfassi



FOR LEASE

58D Bruce McLaren Road, Henderson

An affordable, modern 175m² industrial unit with four on-site car parks.

Colin Stewart



FOR LEASE

199B Lincoln Road, Henderson

Options available from 200m² - 544m² with incentive available for the right tenant.

Meir Alfassi

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Colin Stewart
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021 221 0155



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Peter Jeromson
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Scott Whitten
021 685 063

The West gets \$1 million through new charitable funding model



The Trusts are distributing \$1 million into The West through a new charitable funding model set to help address inequity.

The entity comprising the Portage and Waitākere Licensing Trusts opens the Your West Support Fund and the Your West Innovation Fund on 18 March 2024. Under the framework, the funding will back projects and organisations that can contribute towards long-term positive change in The West.

The grants focus on initiatives that support or are led by communities experiencing inequity in The Trusts' region. The goal is to enable everyone to reach the starting line to lead a good life in The West. This means having the ability to participate, to access opportunities, resources, networks, and supports, that enable people to do well on their own terms.

The development of the funding model has been based on research that surveyed more than 200 charities and community groups throughout The West, as well as supporting data from other sources.

Respondents were asked to identify the biggest issues or trends that will affect communities living in the region over the next 20 years.

More than a quarter of those surveyed (27%) saw social issues or trends having the biggest impact on the community in the future, followed by economic factors (21%) and the environment (17%).

The Elected Members listened to this

feedback and developed a strategy that responded to the information.

Funding Information

Members of the community can apply for their share of \$750,000 through Your West Support Fund. The Trusts has set aside one-off grants to support community initiatives associated with key focus areas. This can include support for project, operating or capital costs.

The debut Your West Innovation Fund will see community groups applying for their share of \$250,000. This fund is designed to support investment in initiatives aligned with key focus areas and having a high potential for impact. This could include investment in seed funding, testing of small-scale innovations, co-design, social enterprises, and evaluation.

Applications for both funds will close on 15 April 2024.

The forthcoming funding round will centre on:

- Improving the lives of young people
- Connected, resilient and thriving communities

Sustainable environments

- Partnering with Māori and/or supporting Pacific communities (Applicants aligning with this focus area must be a kaupapa Māori or a Pacific-led organisation)

Priority will be given to initiatives that support or are led by communities experiencing inequity in the region,

including but not limited to:

- Māori
- Pacific
- MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American and African)
- Refugee-background
- Avondale, Ōwairaka, Henderson, Massey and Rānui

Precedence will also be given to initiatives that:

- Contribute to positive, long-term impact
- Involve collaboration
- Contribute to increased connection and inclusion

CEO of The Trusts, Allan Pollard, says respondents were eager to see investment in rangatahi through youth-led support programmes and the rejuvenation of areas with a high presence of youth. Evidence shows that socio-economic deprivation and other inequities are experienced more by young people and by Māori, Pacific, and diverse ethnic groups, he says.

Pollard says unsurprisingly respondents at the coal face of community need said economic factors would continue to be a significant issue for the area over the next two decades.

"Families are struggling and finding it hard to make ends meet and with living costs continuing to rise even middle-class families were reaching out for support.

"In addition to economic factors, climate change and kaitiakitanga (guardianship of the sky, land, and sea) were key concerns for the majority of respondents," he says.

"Respondents were eager for our organisation to support local initiatives to help support ecosystems and restore biodiversity, reduce emissions and waste, mitigate climate change and educate those in the community on how to live more sustainably."

The research shows clearly there is significant social, economic and environmental need in the West Auckland area. "Based on this evidence, The Trusts have developed key focus areas that will support community where the most impact can be made."

RBA's Food Scraps Pilot Scheme Exceeds Expectations

A trailblazing pilot scheme to divert food scraps from Rosebank Road businesses into community gardens has exceeded all expectations in its first four months.

Second Bite launched in October 2023, and was developed with support from Auckland Council's Waste Management Innovation Fund. Participating in the pilot are Alstef Group, Bidfresh, C-tech, Mulcahy Engineering, Apex Valves, and Southern Spas. By the end of January 2024, the collaboration between the RBA and EcoMatters Environment Trust had diverted 6900 kg of food waste from landfill.

"We couldn't be more pleased with the way businesses have embraced a low-carbon solution to dealing with food scraps," says RBA Executive Engagement Manager Kim Watts. "Not only are they diverting waste from landfill, they're also giving back to the West Auckland community and helping to build climate and food resilience."

The pilot scheme has allowed local compost coordinators from EcoMatters and DEANZ to trial different ways of processing large amounts of food waste in modestly sized community and school gardens. When supplied with larger amounts than originally anticipated, EcoMatters and the team at Hope Garden in New Lynn looked to an unlikely hero: the humble banana swale.

"Banana plants are big feeders, and their roots absorb a remarkable amount of nutrients from food scraps in a short period of time," says Richard Lee,



Food Team Leader at EcoMatters. "Our gardeners have seen large piles of vegetable scraps shrink down to nothing within a week. We've been able to scale up the amount we collect quite quickly, which has been key for providing an efficient solution for businesses that produce a large amount of food waste."

With the nutrients provided by the food scraps, the bananas at Hope Garden have produced plenty of baby banana plants and are starting to fruit.

"It's wonderful to see just how simple waste management can be when we take our cues from nature," says Richard. "The nutrients from food scraps are a precious resource, and they enable us to make rich, fertile soil for growing more food. As a result of the healthy soil humus, the gardens are also able to absorb more rainwater, so the benefits just keep adding up."

EcoMatters CEO Carla Gee hopes Second Bite will prove its value twofold.

"A locally focused model for processing commercial food waste is not only viable, but it can also create systemic benefits for businesses and communities across Aotearoa and support the development of more composting hubs across the country."

Kim Watts agrees. "We're thrilled that the programme allows community gardeners to spend more time on what they do best: sharing food-growing knowledge, forging social connections, and growing food to share."

She adds that nothing will taste as sweet as the first harvest of bananas from the swale.

"We're looking forward to inviting all the businesses 'round for banana muffins baked with bananas they've had a hand in feeding," says Kim.

To join the Second Bite programme, email Richard Lee on richard@ecomatters.org.nz.

What a fantastic turnout at our Rosebank Blood Drive!

Thank you, Rosebank, you have done yourselves proud and showed up when we put the call out!

We've collected 31 units (donations) on the day which will be used to help improve up to 93 of our fellow kiwis' lives.

We need over 5000 blood and plasma donations every week to meet hospital demand and to ensure there is enough available in NZ for those in need.

A big thank you to Kim and her team at the Rosebank Business Association,



who helped get the word out to the local businesses in the area, Love your work!

We would love to see the same energy at our next blood drive in 3 months (watch this space).

If you would like to donate but don't want to do it on your own, we can help. All we need is a minimum of 3 x staff from your place of work to start your own Team Red.

We offer a shuttle to and from the drive, friendly faces, and an experienced team to help make your donation time a smooth process.

Give me a call, text message, or email Christina Nabong, christina.nabong@nzblood.co.nz 027 552 5162

PLN Group Hosting

A huge thank you to Blair McKolskey and the amazing team at PLN Group who hosted our first event for 2024!

Blair McKolskey delivered an insightful presentation on transforming workspaces to boost productivity. The valuable lessons shared are sure to inspire positive changes.

Congrats to Ankur & Sarah on winning the stunning Nautilus lights that PLN gave away on the night, adding an extra sparkle to the evening!



Stefan Crooks and Sheena Evatt Wood



PLN Group CEO Blair McKolskey



David Tolhurst and Ruth Boyes



Linda Potauaine and Maureen McDonnell



Kim Watts and Michele Mill



Janine Roberts, Angela Wilson and Hamiora Jackson



Paul Bondsfield and Mia Boot



Keryn Ryan and Blair McKolsky



Sarah Castle, Angelique Breytenbach and Lee-Anne Johnson



Lee-Ann Griffiths and Tasi Ah Fook

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Rosebank Business Challenge 2024

Ahoy there, me hearties!

On February 20th, 18 teams of 127 shipmates descended on Riversdale Reserve for the annual Rosebank Business Challenge.

This year's theme was "Treasure Island," and there was no shortage of swashbuckling as teams navigated their way around the various islands to complete pirate-themed tasks. Shipmates paired up for a spirited three-legged race en route to Holdson's "Stump Quest Atol," where scrubbing the decks revealed a hidden pirate. From there, it was plain sailing to Anglo Engineering's "Runtime Terror Cove," where mates tried their luck at fishing for sharks in infested waters. Even with the fear of rogue ships lurking nearby, rival teams wasted no time in challenging each other by sword duels at Blum's "Coral Latch Cay."

The anticipation in the air was imbued with the spirit of adventure as pirates collected bounty stationery from a treasure chest nestled at Direct Office Products Depot's "Paper Shore Reef." A mischievous shipmate faced the consequence of walking the plank upon reaching Autex Industries' "Muffled Sounds" before diving into the water to count the sharks.

Next, it was time to navigate to Spark Waitakere Hub's "Sparkling Sands," where mates engaged in a lively game of Treasure Island cornhole. The voyage continued to Bon Accord's "Sipkey Island," where Polly did want a cracker, with participants enjoying Arnott's crackers after retrieving a can of hot chocolate. One particularly enterprising pirate even sifted through their hot chocolate in search of hidden treasure!

At the scenic "Shimmy Shake Bay," sponsored by VIBE, pirates were invited to dress up with provided props and capture group photos while savouring a chilled can of VIBE, before dodging cannonballs to retrieve rubber ducks at Tyres4U's "Zen Tread Haven."

It wasn't all smooth sailing, however, as teams had to collect tokens along the way and solve a word jumble to claim their team's bounty (bag of goodies).

It was great to see teams coming together as they embarked on a journey of camaraderie and discovery, unearthing a wealth of treasures to be enjoyed among friends and enriching the event with laughter and lasting memories.

We would like to thank our major sponsors – Holdson, Anglo Engineering, Blum, DOPD, Autex Industries, Spark Waitakere Hub, Bon Accord, VIBE, and Tyres4U - for their continued support. We are also grateful for the generous donations of gifts for our bounty bags and the wonderful spot prizes provided by local businesses.







Rheem New Zealand:

Always Innovating

It sits there quietly in your home, tucked away in a closet, one of the most important appliances in any household. In days past, it might have warmed your folded towels or helped to dry out a pair of rugby boots, although progress has transformed it into one of the most efficient products on the market when it comes to heat loss. Your hot water heater is an appliance that you usually never need think about - unless, of course, something goes wrong (a swift way to discover that cold showers are a step too far in your daily wellness routine).

Critically important is installing a quality product from an industry leader in both reliability and innovation. Rheem, whose main New Zealand manufacturing plant sits on Rosebank Road, is proud to fit the bill.

"Most of the products we sell in New Zealand are designed and manufactured here," says General Manager Mark McCutcheon, describing just part of what makes the 99-year-old company special. "We feel like we can understand customers' needs and design solutions for them, which is quite exciting. To have engineering, manufacturing, and

operations all here - that's quite cool."

Rheem, a global business founded by two American brothers in 1925, has been a trusted name in water heating since its arrival on our shores in 1958. Known for manufacturing quality hot water cylinders, the company has a lot more to offer than consumers may realise, including boiling water units and cutting-edge solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and



systems. Rheem is at the forefront of energy-efficient technology using heat

pump technology to heat hot water, and they're the only manufacturer of vitreous enamel products in New Zealand, a glass coating that protects the hot water cylinder from all manner of water quality damage, lengthening its lifespan.

"We're innovating all the time," says Mark. "Hot water cylinders are appliances consumers often don't give too much thought to - they just work away quietly in the background - and it's easy to assume they are the same today as they have always been. But if you look at what we're doing around solar PV, heat pumps, and the ideas we have around the standard hot water cylinder, we're always innovating to try to move things forward."

Mark is dedicated to upholding Rheem's sterling reputation, something he knows can crumble if not maintained. A strong customer focus is key, he says, and in the hot water industry, that means giving the tradies some TLC.

"Hot water cylinders are a low-touch product - an appliance that the consumer doesn't interact with often - so the tradesperson is very influential in making the brand choice," he says. "Quality is really important, as well as



longevity, reliability, ease of installation, and good product backup and support around warranties. Because plumbers install things in a certain way, once they get to know a product, they will buy it again and again, as long as you look after them."

Rheem partners with Master Plumbers to facilitate the certification of new tradies entering the industry via the Masterlink apprenticeship placement programme, and they have their own in-house training facility, running online courses and an ongoing face-to-face programme to train and upskill plumbers. "As leaders in the plumbing and gas fitting industry," Mark says, "we also support the National Association of Women in Construction, and we're partners of the Apprenticeship Training Trust and a number of other organisations as well."

Behind the scenes at Rheem, the brand's innovation focus is supported by a culture of continuous improvement. "We're always trying to improve things," says Operations Manager Patrick Troute. Patrick oversees production, quality, health and safety, supply chain, and engineering at Rheem's Avondale plant and at their satellite plant in Christchurch. "I drive a lot of cost-down projects. Many of the engineers we hire are degree qualified and quite practical, so we can do most of the design in house, since a lot of the equipment we fabricate is quite bespoke. That being said, we're also going outside the business to invest in new machines with the latest technology."

Originally from Ireland, Patrick never intended to build a career at Rheem when he came on board in his late 20s. ("When I came over here [to New Zealand], it was only going to be for six months. I was going to get married, then I had a really good job lined up in Dublin.") But thanks to the company's willingness to grow - and the creative freedom given to their engineers - he worked his way up over the past three decades. "Working for Rheem, the managers and the people working above you are so down to earth and they care about you - you're not just a

number," he says. "Rheem cares - they're a caring company, and they're honest and they respect you."

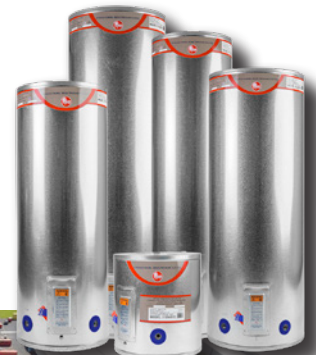
Mark agrees, and he says the team culture is most like a family. "I know every business says that, but it's true at Rheem," he says. "There's an appreciation for people. There are lots and lots of people who have been here a long time - some as long as 35 and 45 years - and everyone looks after each other. On the other side, we're like a sports team in that we have a strategy and it rolls down into goals and objectives... but it's got a bit of a soft edge to it, because everyone's trying their best."

The business is proud to give back to the community, too, including passionate support for conservation organisation Save the Kiwi. "At its peak, there were millions of kiwi in New Zealand," says Mark, "and now there's something like 68,000 at the last official count because of the number of roaming cats and dogs. The birth rate from eggs to hatchlings is very small in the wild; the male kiwi incubates the egg, and if a cat or dog comes near, he will run away and the egg gets eaten. Save the Kiwi has taken the initiative to make sure it doesn't ever get to the point where kiwi are in danger of becoming extinct."

Rheem's commitment to sustainability extends to its own practices, with a three-prong sustainability programme in place to reduce the brand's carbon footprint and increase the energy efficiency of their products. Both Mark and Patrick look forward to their product innovations taking centre stage in the coming year as more consumers learn about and adopt solar PV panels and hot water heat pumps.

"We're often seen to represent quality, reliability and trustworthiness," says Mark, "and we are all of those things - and we're innovators, too."

For more information about Rheem and their product range, visit www.rheem.co.nz



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Exodus (Back) to the Office:

Is WFH Really Coming to an End?



Midway through 2023, the whispers began to circulate: *In America, they're making everyone go back to the office.* Nearly four years on from Covid, businesses in the United States seemed to be mounting a pushback against remote and hybrid working, eager to resume the pre-pandemic status quo of "bums in seats" at the office. Now that work-from-home arrangements (Work from Home - WFH) had finally made possible a realistic work-life balance for thousands of Kiwis, the idea sent chills down the spines of anyone accustomed to skipping their twice-daily commute in favor of walking the dog, working out or simply managing the school run with a few less tears.

But are Americans and other workers around the globe really being forced to return to chin wags at the water cooler and adhering to traditional office hours? And what does this mean for New Zealand businesses and employees?

Unsurprisingly, data from Stats NZ (as well as from the United States, Canada, Australia, and the UK) show that the number of people working exclusively from home has gone down since Covid.

In Australia, recent percentage drops are on the small side (37% of people regularly worked from home in 2023, compared to 40% in 2021), while American magazine USA Today reports that Americans worked 25% of their days from home in 2023, compared to 60% in 2020.

Still, the number of people who work remotely for at least part of the week is significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels, and in New Zealand, that number seems to be holding firm. According to the latest Household Labour Force Survey, around 3 in 10 Kiwis worked from home at least part of the week in the December quarter of 2023, a proportion that has been more or less steady since March 2022. Of those people, 88.3% usually worked from home at least some of the time – and the number of people who worked from home and usually did so went up by over 7%. Almost a quarter of New Zealand businesses (23%) report that the past two years have led to giving their employees more choice over where to work, with the financial and insurance industries (followed by telcos and professional, scientific or technical

services) leading the charge.

Simply put, the rumours of the death of remote working have been greatly exaggerated.

"Now that we've got a taste of it, it's going to be the big elephant in the room for the rest of time," says Mela Lush, founder of Kiwi employment community Jobs for Mums (<https://www.jobsformums.co.nz>). Mela, a solo mum of two young children, founded the family-friendly jobsite to meet the needs of parents who struggle to balance the demands of modern life with traditional 9-5 working arrangements. Through partnerships with employers of all sizes, from Spark and Fonterra to local-area construction and gardening businesses, Jobs for Mum advertises opportunities that are flexible and often part-time.

"The way we're working isn't working for families and parents," she says. "We started the 9-5 workday when women were the home providers of the family, nurturing the family, and the other partner would go outside the home to earn a living. But fast forward to today, and that's not an option. Both parents have to work, and it's difficult when the way

we live isn't set up to facilitate that."

Women in particular, Mela points out, are negatively impacted by a lack of flexibility in working arrangements, especially with advances in artificial intelligence (AI). "What we know is that about 40-160 million worldwide are going to need transitional occupation, and that's as many as 105,000 New Zealand women," she says, citing the Global Women Diversity and Inclusion Report 2023. "AI is going to disproportionately affect roles that are repetitive, like bookkeeping, basic customer service, and administration, so it's already going to be impacting more women because those are the roles that women tend to gravitate towards, because of that flexibility arc. Women are already disadvantaged because we've got the 80% gender pay gap attributed to the motherhood penalty. So it's really imperative that we start thinking and learning what's next for us as a society and as an economy."

The solution, she says, is in seizing the opportunity presented by Covid's embrace of WFH to create a new work model that includes flexibility as standard. Her perspective matches up with what experts in the United States predict for the future of work; according to USA Today, the return-to-office movement died in 2023, and employers need to find a way to make hybrid working the new norm. The benefits to businesses, Mela says, are well worth the effort.

"We know that flexibility is the number one motivator for women with children, and flexibility is a huge motivator for anyone anywhere - nine times out of ten, it will be more important than pay. We also know that diversity and inclusion drives productivity, and if you don't advertise flexible roles, you only attract the same types of people. So offering flexibility is a great way to attract



talent - you just have to make sure you've hired the right people in the organisation to lead change for remote work forces."

Common concerns, such as ensuring productivity when WFH workers have easy access to Netflix and naptime, are best addressed by looking at leadership practices, says Mela, rather than micromanaging employees.

"When people say, 'What about productivity?', there are so many strategies and tools to mitigate that in an organisation. Or 'We need the team in the office to do that.' Is that true? The data is not suggesting that anyone who is in the office is more productive than anyone who isn't. It's really all about effective leadership. It's not about your people, it's about the leaders that you have in place and how good are they at managing expectations, communicating their expectations, and monitoring progress. And managing the need to control and watch people. People can be at the office and do bugga all, too."

"Empty chairs are not empty in reality; memories always sit there"



DAVIS

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Our Highlights



Rosebank Business Challenge

Took place at Riversdale Reserve and featured an Amazing Race-inspired event with teams navigating obstacles, dancing the Macarena, and solving puzzles, while having loads of fun.



KitchenMania hosting

KitchenMania held the first RBA Hosting for 2023



Lunch with Mike Jones

Mike Jones, the chief economist of BNZ, engaged in discussions about the current economic challenges faced by NZers and businesses during a business lunch hosted by the RBA and BNZ.



Free Health Checks

For the 3rd year in a row, Unitec Students came to Rosebank on the 10/11 October to carry out FREE Health Checks for our Rosebank business employees.



Fruit Care Packs

The RBA gave back to its local business community by hand-delivering 600 Care Fruit Packs to business staff, local schools, and food parcel providers.



Chairman's Shout

A luncheon featuring RBA Board Chair, Stefan Crooks, provided candid insights into his life's journey



Pathways to the Future Trust

The RBA worked with PTTFT to reward 24 Rosebank business employees with funding to advance their vocational careers by contributing to vocational courses, textbooks, or tools of the trade

in 2023



Gumboot Friday

Despite the rain, dedicated employees of Rosebank braved the weather, donning their gumboots to show support for Gumboot Friday.



2 Degrees North/West Business Awards

The RBA was once again a finalist in the 2023 2degrees Business Awards for 'Excellence in Community Contribution'.



Spark - Internet of Things

The Spark Innovation Studio Roadshow visited Rosebank to share how connected devices can help businesses become more productive and sustainable.



Donate a Can

Rosebank business employees showcased their altruistic spirit by donating food and toys to West Auckland families in need, truly embodying the essence of giving.

Business Nuts & Bolts

Business to Business advice from **RBA Members & Partners**



Aaron Martin
NZ Immigration Law

New Immigration Measures Prompt Mixed Reactions From Employers

As the first quarter of 2024 unfolds, New Zealand finds itself grappling with a series of immigration policy adjustments that have left both employers and prospective immigrants in a state of uncertainty.

One of the headline changes introduced by the government has been met with a tepid response from various quarters. The decision to halt the increase in the median wage required for work visas, albeit temporarily, has provided some relief to employers. However, this relief is only partial, as the measure does not extend to workers seeking residency. Consequently, employers still face pressure to increase wages for international workers aspiring for residency status. The overall sentiment among employers regarding this development has been one of disappointment.

The economic situation nationally is already beginning to manifest, with rising unemployment rates across the country. This has prompted heightened scrutiny of labour market tests conducted as part of employer Job Check applications. Under this process, accredited employers seek permission to recruit from overseas, with stringent criteria in place for positions falling outside the Green List parameters. With unemployment on the rise, employers are advised to meticulously justify and document

why local candidates were passed over in favour of international hires.

Moreover, immigration authorities have ramped up efforts to verify the declarations made by employers during the accreditation process. This includes scrutinising evidence of financial sustainability, compliance with immigration and employment laws, and verification of the immigration status of staff members. Failure to comply with documentation requests within stipulated time frames could result in instant fines, underlining the urgency for employers to ensure thorough compliance.

The implementation of the Worker Protection (Migrant and Other Employees) Act 2023 has empowered immigration authorities to compel employers to furnish documentation promptly. With over 300 ongoing investigations into accredited employers, the threat of fines for non-compliance looms large. The Job Check process has emerged as a crucial tool in identifying and penalising non-compliant employers.

In light of these developments, employers are urged to revisit their accreditation commitments and ensure full compliance with immigration regulations. Seeking clarity and assistance is advised for those unsure of their obligations.

As the immigration landscape continues to evolve, navigating these changes will undoubtedly pose challenges for employers. Finding the delicate balance between meeting workforce needs and adhering to regulatory requirements remains paramount in the months ahead.

If you need help with compliance or understanding your obligations as an accredited employer, or to navigate the job check process or Immigration audit, contact our team at NZIL.



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Jason Ennor
MyHR Co-founder
and CEO

How to get the best out of 90-day trial periods

Just before Christmas, the government amended the Employment Relations Act, reinstating the ability for businesses of all sizes to use 90-day trial periods for new employees.

Ninety-day trials are a really effective tool for assessing a person's suitability for a role and providing some protection against personal grievance claims. But, like all employment processes, they need to be done with the right attention to good faith and proper procedure.

What are 90-day trial periods?

All trial periods must be agreed to by the employee and included in the employment agreement.

Ninety-day trials can last up to the first 90 calendar days of employment, but they cannot be extended beyond 90 days.

Trial periods can be used for all new employees, as long as they haven't been employed with the company before. However, you can still use them for someone you've previously "engaged" in a different capacity, such as a contractor or temp.

What protection does a 90-day trial period give an employer?

Employees on a 90-day trial period are unable to raise a personal grievance related to dismissal if the dismissal was managed fairly and in accordance with the law.

Employees can still raise a grievance on other grounds, such as for unjustified disadvantage or discrimination, or if the trial period itself is invalid.

All other conditions of employment and minimum entitlements around pay, conditions, leave, and health and safety are not affected by the trial period.

How to make sure a trial period is valid

- The 90-day trial period and its length must be clearly stated in the employment agreement.
- You must give the employee "fair and reasonable time" to review their agreement and seek advice prior to starting work. We recommend a minimum of two working days.

- Both parties need to sign the employment agreement prior to the employee's start date (it can't be signed on their first day of work).
- The person cannot have worked for you before, so make sure there are no pre-existing employment relationships (for example, if the company had a previous owner).

If you can't include a 90-day trial period in the employment agreement, you may be able to use a probationary period instead. However, you can't put an employee on a probationary period after a trial period.

Ninety-day trials can last up to the first 90 calendar days of employment, but they cannot be extended beyond 90 days.

During the trial period

Make sure every new employee goes through a well-structured onboarding process that provides training and support. Set regular review meetings, give detailed feedback, and document the process.

Treat the person as you would any other employee. This means being fair, providing clear direction, and giving them the opportunity to improve.

Address any issues (even minor ones) early so the employee knows where they stand.

If there are issues that may lead to termination, make it clear that the employee may be dismissed if they don't improve. If it's not made crystal clear that the person's job may be on the line, you may be challenged when it comes to dismissal.

How to terminate employment during a trial period

You don't need to provide a reason if you decide to end a person's employment while they're on a valid 90-day trial period.

However, good faith obligations still apply, so you should meet with them privately to explain why they haven't met your expectations. Be prepared to listen to their side of the story.

If you still decide to dismiss them, tell them their employment is terminated. If they ask for the reasons for the dismissal or want it in writing, you need to provide that.

You must give the person the correct amount of notice; there are no "instant dismissals" during a trial period.

If you decide to give them an opportunity to improve, create a performance improvement plan that includes activities, key milestones, and any training or support you will provide.



Kate de Lautour
The Icehouse

The SME State of Play For 2024. Part 2. Strategic solutions

Aligning your team to your strategy

It is a leader's responsibility to ensure their team is aligned with the company strategy, mission, and values. However, according to a 2017 survey by PwC, an astonishing 93% of employees don't understand their company's strategy!

Research shows that employees who are misaligned with the big picture develop frustration, disengagement, and a lack of motivation. When the team knows their mission and it is articulated regularly, they have a stronger connection to the business, they understand their essential role, and they are empowered to be more productive in their roles.

Solutions can be as simple as physically displaying your mission, tagline, or values in the office; communicating your "why" whenever possible through regular meetings; or creating KPIs based on your top-level strategy.

Managing expectations

Entrepreneurs and business owners naturally carry the weight of expectation with them daily. They may have started the business with a vision to achieve x, y, and z, but everything becomes more complicated when the business isn't making the anticipated progress.

Determining expectations early on is fine, but be prepared to realise that these can't be set in stone. How the business looks today is unquestionably unrecognisable from how it looked on day one, so expectations need to be fluid and can be reset.

Prioritising and utilising what you have over what you want

Making business decisions based on sensible and sustainable strategies begins by setting achievable, specific, and attainable

goals that are continually reviewed.

Consider a risk assessment or SWOT analysis around whether what you have is good enough to sustain operations for a set period. What do the financials say about the right and affordable time for upgrades? And in which areas?

Building closer partnerships

While many entrepreneurs and owners see themselves as an island, it's impossible to do it all alone. Looking back on the early days of their ownership journey, they'll often realise they were more collaborative than they thought – for example, when they changed banks or accountants, or the time they found a supplier whose reduced rates helped them when they started out.

The success of any organisation depends on the quality of its present and future partnerships. This is a philosophy The Icehouse is passionate about; partnering enables you to expand, develop and innovate, and the benefits continue as you grow.

Sound financial decision-making during times of uncertainty

By making informed choices about investments, expenses, and financing, a business can enhance profitability, strengthen its financial position, and navigate economic challenges effectively. However, while only 40% of small-to-medium-sized enterprise (SME) owners consider themselves financially illiterate, 81% still do the finances themselves (CPA Practice Advisor).

This is where additional training can be a genuine business asset, particularly in uncertain times. For example, a detailed understanding of cash flow forecasting and the analysis of operational performance can indicate where working capital and cash are consumed at high rates.

Unlike critical thinking or communication skills, which owners add to their toolbox organically as the years roll on, financial literacy cannot be picked up along the way with any degree of proficiency.

The Icehouse offers Financial Skills Workshops in Auckland. Message me for dates at k.delautour@theicehouse.co.nz or check the calendar www.theicehouse.co.nz

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Taina Henderson
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Who Stays in the Family Home?

The end of a relationship prompts questions like: who gets to stay in the house? Who pays the mortgage? Can my home be sold from under me if I can't buy them out right away?

Defining the family home

Broadly speaking, the "family home" is the dwelling where the couple was living at the time of separation, regardless of when it was bought and with whose money, or whether it is owned by one or both partners.

Who stays in the house if we separate?

One person's actions often decide this in the heat of the moment, but it should be well thought out.

The law would generally see minor children of the relationship stay in the house with the person they naturally turn to for their day-to-day needs. Applying for an occupation order tasks a Judge with deciding who should stay in the home. Judges must have particular regard to the needs of any minor children when making this decision.

Not ready to apply to Court? A Family Dispute Resolution mediator can help resolve issues around children.

For renters, the Court can make orders vesting the tenancy agreement in one party. For trust-owned properties, the Courts have avenues to show a right to live there.

Who pays the mortgage?

Generally, the one staying. However, if both names are on the mortgage, both are responsible for payments and agreeing how outgoings are covered. If the one staying has young children and can't afford the mortgage, they may be entitled to spousal maintenance. If one party pays the mortgage but lives elsewhere, unless it is maintenance, they may be entitled to compensation once

the property is divided.

One option is switching to interest only or taking a mortgage holiday while working through the division of property.

If a solution isn't found, the Court will rule, balancing any disadvantage to the person who moved out and sometimes ordering them to pay spousal maintenance.

Can my ex-partner sell the house from under me?

Probably, but not quickly, and not without accounting for minor children's interests. If the home is owned in equal shares, one party can ask the Court for an order for sale, but the other is entitled to make their case against it. You can apply for an order for sale even if your name is not on the title.

If the title is in one party's name, a notice of claim can be lodged to stop any sale prior to Court determination or mutual agreement.

Can I buy out my ex-partner and vice versa?

You can agree that one party will take over the mortgage and pay out the other's share. If you cannot agree, or both want to buy out the other, a Court can decide to list the property on the open market by auction and both can bid on it.

Do I need a formal agreement?

The bank may require a formal agreement to buy out your ex-partner. Parties trying to DIY or go without an agreement may end up with something not aligned to current law and susceptible to later challenge.

Is division always 50/50?

The Property (Relationships) Act 1976 established sharing of the family home, but one party can be entitled to more. Exceptions include: s13 in relation to extraordinary circumstances that make equal sharing "repugnant to justice"; s15, which rebalances lower earnings caused by roles assumed during the relationship; and relationships shorter than three years.

If my partner moves into a property I own, how can I stop them taking half if we separate?

If you live together in a marriage, civil union, or are three years de facto (potentially less, if children are involved), you would need to agree in a contracting out agreement. Because these agreements depart from protections under the Act, some compromise will ensure it doesn't get overturned for unfairness.

Even if your home is already managed by family trust, seek advice on whether and how it should be fairly used as the family home.

If you're separating, protect your interests by seeking early legal advice. To learn more, listen to the Divorce Café podcast or call Henderson Reeves on 09 281 3723.



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Jennifer Wyatt Sargent
Human Resources Consultant

How to Weed Out the Boy with a Bad Attitude

"Well there are winners and outlaws and leaders and lovers behind every man in the news, and one thing I know is behind every one there's a boy who had nothing to lose. Behind every man who has something to say, there's a boy who had nothin' to prove. Every hero was once, every villain was once, just a boy with a bad attitude."

Meatloaf, Bad Attitude, 1985

I love quotations; they are often a clever and memorable way of putting across a point. I read the quotation above several times before realising that, as lyrics, the punctuation made sense when it was set to music. Reading it as such, I got it.

So how do you protect yourself and your organisation from the villain, the bad egg, who was once just a boy (or girl) with a bad attitude? In other words, how do you keep your business safe from theft and fraud?

1. **Be aware**, and take your time. If your business falls into the category of a small-to-medium-sized enterprise (SME), you are more open to the risk of theft and fraud than larger organisations in the following ways:

- The owner is almost certainly too busy to check that policies and procedures are being followed.
- While it's a good idea to delegate responsibilities, often there are too few staff with the requisite skills and experience to take them on.

To counter this, keep your wits about you. When asked an unexpected question, don't be tempted to give an off-the-cuff response. Always give yourself the time to think about the question and what might be behind it.

2. **Know where the biggest risks are.** Usually these are in the areas of ordering, invoicing, and goods in transit. (You'd be surprised at how many items fall off the back of a van.)

3. **Prevention is essential.** Have policies and procedures that must be followed. For example:

- Invoices, whether business-to-business or business-to-consumer, and even from trusted suppliers, must be checked to ensure bank account numbers and domain names agree with your records. If you have any doubts, check that the invoice is from a genuine company by phoning them on a publicly listed phone number.
- Employees who do invoicing and accounting duties must take two weeks' uninterrupted annual leave each year.
- Perform spot audits.
- If any employees have the use of a company credit card, always review the statement to ensure no personal purchases have been made with it.

- Your accountant should not be a signatory on company bank accounts.

4. **When recruiting, make sure the interview panel understands the risks of the position.**

- Use people who are prepared to ask probing questions.
- Check references (do not accept paper ones). Always ask the candidate what the relationship is between themselves and the referee, and then ask the referee the same question when you speak to them.
- Never be sceptical of an interviewer who "has a feeling" about a candidate. That feeling could be valid.

5. **The organisation's culture can be a powerful deterrent to wrongdoing.**

- Everybody, including directors, should sign and model a code of conduct that defines the organisation's values and rules about behaviour expected at work and governs its conduct wherever it operates.
- Compliance with the code of conduct and all applicable laws and standards should be a condition of working for the organisation. This promotes a culture of fair and ethical behaviour, which encourages the reporting of corrupt practices, breaches of the law and matters detrimental to the organisation's reputation.

6. **Be aware of the risk of theft of intellectual property and your client database.** Use a reputable IT specialist to ensure there are good controls around your computer databases.

7. **Be quietly aware of your employees' private lives.** Gamblers and drug users all need money to fund their habit.

There probably isn't any one sure way to prevent theft and fraud, but it helps to have good practices and procedures in place throughout the business, a robust recruitment process, and a culture that encourages openness and honesty at all levels and protects whistleblowers. Sometimes one or other of these is sufficient to expose wrongdoing, while other times it's a combination of them all. Occasionally, it comes down to sheer good luck.

My thanks to Tim Livingstone of UHY Haines Norton for his insight into some of the sneakier ways people try to get their hands on your property and money.



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Chantal Laidler
Smith & Partners Lawyers

Understanding Supply Agreements

A Supply Agreement is a legally binding document that outlines the terms and conditions governing the sale and purchase of goods or services between commercial parties. Its purpose is to establish a clear understanding of the rights and obligations of both the supplier and the buyer, to foster a mutually beneficial relationship. Supply Agreements may be for one-off transactions, or long term, ongoing arrangements.

Legal considerations

It is important to have supply agreements drafted or reviewed by a legal expert to ensure that the arrangements are consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

Some considerations include:

- A. Fair Trading Act 1986: Ensure compliance with the Fair Trading Act, which prohibits false or misleading representations, deceptive conduct, unsafe products and unfair practices in trade.
- B. Consumer Guarantees Act 1993: Understand the implications of the Consumer Guarantees Act, and ensure goods are of acceptable quality and fit for purpose.
- C. Privacy Act 2020: If personal information will be collected, the different protections and methods you have in place will need to be set out.

Drafting of effective Supply Agreements:

Effective Supply Agreements need to carefully set out the obligations and responsibilities of each party. It is important to have clarity on the parties' expectations at the outset and define these so that there is no room for ambiguity. Indemnity clauses and liability limitations need to be carefully considered and stated to

allocate risks appropriately between the parties.

The Supply Agreement should set out the governing law of the contract to provide clarity on the legal framework that will be applied in case of disputes. This is especially important if one party is based outside of New Zealand. It is also sensible to include mechanisms for resolving disputes, to avoid costly and time-consuming litigation.

Special Considerations for Long-Term Supply Agreements:

For long term Supply Agreements, it is important to manage the relationship and ensure continuing success. This can be achieved by adding in Key Performance Indicators to measure and evaluate the performance of both parties. This not only promotes accountability and fosters continuous improvement, but also sets clear standards.

Long term agreements should also have a review provision to ensure there is a clear process for reviewing the agreement. This helps to ensure the agreement continues to be relevant and gives the parties the ability to adapt to change in business over time. The timeframe of each review will depend on the term of the agreement.

As the relationship will be ongoing, ownership of any intellectual property created during the relationship needs to be clearly set out including any licensing terms and whether any intellectual property rights will be transferred to one party, either during the term of the agreement or at the end of the term. It is also important to set out what happens to intellectual property upon the termination or at the end of the agreement so that the relevant party's rights are protected.

Any supply agreement should also include robust confidentiality provisions to protect sensitive information shared between the parties during the course of the agreement, and ensure this obligation continues after the agreement ends.

In some cases, the parties may wish to insert an exclusivity clause which sets out that the seller may only provide goods to a specific customer, or that the customer may only sell specific goods within a defined area. Any such provision should be carefully considered to ensure that it is practical for both parties involved and complies with the competition and cartel provisions of the Commerce Act.

As the business landscape continues to evolve, a well-crafted Supply Agreement remains an essential tool for success. If you have a Supply Agreement that you need reviewed or require a new agreement to be drafted contact Smith and Partners commercial specialist, Chantal Laidler on 09 837 6833 or email Chantal.laidler@smithpartners.co.nz.



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