

Hunter Campbell

Hunter Campbell *2025 Market Insights.*





Contents

01. Hunter Campbell Market Insights

A word from Lee Marshall, Managing Partner	04
Economic Update - Brad Olsen	06
Your practical next steps for AI adoption	08
Culture that sticks	12
Hire for capability, not just confidence	16

02. Accounting Market Insights

From the desks of Jason Hinton & Chris Cooper	18
The Modern CFO	20
The value of reconnecting with Kiwi Accountants abroad	22
Why ERP systems implementations succeed	24
Salary Guide - Accounting	28
Accounting Team	30

03. Financial Services & Risk Market Insights

From the desk of Daniel Turner	32
Leading through change	34
The rise of the Corporate Strategist	36
Salary Guide - Financial Services	38
Financial Services Team	41

04. Sales & Marketing Market Insights

From the desk of Sindy Ward	42
Picking up the pieces	44
CRM strategy that delivers results	46
Where Marketing teams are investing in brand in 2025	48
Salary Guide - Sales & Marketing	50
Sales & Marketing Team	54

05. Supply Chain, Operations & Procurement Market Insights

From the desk of Wayne Fry	56
Talent shortages in New Zealand's Supply Chain Sector	58
Procurement redefined	60
AI is changing Procurement & Supply Chains	62
Salary Guide - Supply Chain, Operations & Procurement	64
Supply Chain, Operations & Procurement Team	70

01.

Hunter Campbell Market Insights

*A word from
Lee Marshall
Managing
Partner*



It's hard to believe it's been a full year since our last edition of Market Insights, and now here we are on our fifth.

This publication has become a cornerstone in our calendar and a valuable touchpoint for reflecting on the market and sharing what we're seeing on the ground.

This year, you'll notice we've refined the format. All our specialist divisions are now featured in a single, cohesive report, a deliberate move to reflect the way we work: aligned, integrated, and committed to delivering the best service across every area we support.

The toughest year yet

I've worked in recruitment for 19 years, and I can honestly say the last 12 months have been the most challenging of my career. We all knew the market was due for a correction, what no one could have predicted was how long we'd be stuck at the bottom of the cycle.

We've seen deeper recessions before, but they've passed more quickly. This one has dragged. And that prolonged uncertainty has created a uniquely tough environment for both employers and job seekers.

There was a clear period of market contraction: job losses, cost-cutting, and widespread headcount reduction. In a downturn, recruitment spend is often viewed as discretionary. When a resignation occurs, the first instinct becomes: Do we really need to replace this role?

That delay filters through the whole ecosystem. Hiring decisions take longer, more people are involved, and roles are scrutinised more heavily. It all creates a more cautious, slower-moving, and at times, frustratingly stagnant market.

Not all doom and gloom

Despite the noise and headlines, there are still plenty of businesses doing exceptional work and thriving in a tough environment and we're proud to call many of them businesses we partner with.

We also can't talk about this period without acknowledging the economic backdrop.

We began 2025 with a cautious sense of optimism. But the introduction of new tariffs added another layer of complexity and with it, uncertainty. Market volatility has followed, and from a recruitment perspective, it gives people one more reason to pause.

What we've done at Hunter Campbell

Our focus, first and foremost, has been on our own people. Making sure our team felt secure, supported, and set up to deliver for their clients.

Even in a difficult year, we've achieved a lot we're proud of:

- ✓ Launched and delivered our internal L&D programme, HC Standard of Excellence
- ✓ Released the first-ever Mood of the CFO survey
- ✓ Launched the HR Leadership Insights Series
- ✓ Published the inaugural Supply Chain Mastery report
- ✓ Continued our commitment to Camp Quality
- ✓ Another successful trip to London connecting with Kiwi expat talent

One of our core pillars has always been creating internal pathways and we've lived that this year. Several team members have stepped into new roles, and we've welcomed great new people into the business: Callum, Dan, Joe and Shafreen among them.

Looking ahead

Because we've kept our Hunter Campbell crew together, we're in a strong position to take advantage of whatever the market throws at us next. We've doubled down on our specialisations, stayed close to our communities, and made sure we're properly resourced for the year ahead.

We move forward with cautious optimism, there's that word again, and a clear sense of purpose.

Thank you for reading this edition of Market Insights, and thank you to all our clients, candidates, and partners who've stayed the course with us.

Here's to the next chapter, we're looking forward to a good one.

Lee Marshall
Managing Partner



Economic Update

*Brad Olsen - Chief Executive and
Principal Economist, Infometrics*

The economic outlook is tough to pick, with the fog of uncertainty hovering on the horizon as global economic and trade activity continuously adjust to US tariffs being imposed, increased, paused, and everything in between – plus an ongoing slowdown in the Chinese economy and conflict in Ukraine, Gaza, and the India-Pakistan border.

Originally, 2025 was the year of recovery, as interest rates fell and stimulated more activity. Although that recovery will still occur, the pace of revived economic growth is likely to be more restrained than first thought, with uncertainty forcing businesses and households to act cautiously in the face of more changes than stability. Investment decisions, already hampered by higher interest rates, are now increasingly being deferred as businesses wait out the constantly changing global operating environment.

Domestically, economic activity is showing signs of recovery, but it's not a swift change. Economic activity lifted 0.7% in the December 2024 quarter, with primary sector and services activity increasing. Manufacturing activity has started to expand again as production and new orders improve, according to recent Performance of Manufacturing Index figures from BusinessNZ/BNZ.

Interest rates continue to fall, with the Reserve Bank cutting the OCR and expected to keep doing so until around mid-2025. Lower interest rates are moving the foot off the economic brake, but aren't trying to shift to the accelerator – instead, lower interest rates are expected to help support more usual levels of spending and investment, as the economy seeks to find the new “normal” after some big ups and downs in recent years.

Inflation has been pulled back down into the Reserve Bank's 1-3%pa target range, an encouraging sign. There is still some lingering concern around inflation, with food prices

reaccelerating recently and higher costs for government services and energy also front of mind for many. Businesses are worried about further cost increases, but are looking to absorb those increases if possible to maintain market share amid tougher sales conditions. Households will continue to refix onto lower mortgage rates throughout 2025, freeing up more funds to spend in the economy – although a more challenging labour market will sustain some caution.

The unemployment rate appears at or near a peak at just over 5%, although wage, job, and hiring intentions differ considerably across industries. Jobs activity is set to pick up more, across the board, once household spending recovers more and businesses feel able to commit to higher staffing levels.

The primary sector remains a key early driver of the economic recovery, with higher dairy, meat, and horticulture commodity prices adding more cash into rural and provincial economies, fuelling debt repayments, catch-up on deferred works, and more spending generally, helping to rev up the economy. That stronger economic momentum will spill over into urban areas as we move through the year.



infometrics.co.nz

June, 2025

Your practical next steps for AI adoption

*Nick Roco - Managing
Director, Morningside AI*



“I know I need to do something with AI, but I have no idea where to start.” I have heard this same confession from 80+ different CEOs, CTOs, and operational leaders in the past six months.

While most have dabbled with ChatGPT, Claude, or Microsoft Copilot for replying to emails or writing basic reports, nearly all recognise they're barely scratching the surface of what's possible. If this sounds familiar, I can promise you that you are certainly not alone.

After implementing AI across industries, from steel manufacturing to elderly care to marketing agencies and everything in between, my most significant discovery has been surprisingly simple: the organisations seeing transformative results are not those with the biggest budgets or technical teams. They are the organisations with a systematic approach to adoption.

Why does this AI stuff even matter?

In our opinion, at current state, AI is most impactful in three distinct ways:

Better workforce performance: AI acts as a powerful multiplier for your existing talent. At Morgan Stanley, 98% of advisors now use AI daily, turning multi-day client follow-ups into same-day resolutions and freeing valuable time for strategic work.

Better operations: AI excels at handling the repetitive tasks that consume valuable time. Klarna's AI customer service assistant handles two-thirds of all support chats, cutting resolution times from 11 minutes to just 2, and generating \$40 million in projected profit improvement.

Better customer experiences: AI can help personalise experiences at scale. Indeed's AI-powered job matching increased application starts by 20% and hiring success by 13%, delivering growth through personalised interactions at scale.

The point is: this AI stuff works. The companies seeing concrete results recognise AI adoption as a journey, not as a quick win.

The pillars of successful AI adoption

What we've learned at Morningside AI is that successful AI transformation is not linear - it is holistic. Companies that excel don't just focus on one aspect of AI adoption, they build capability across three interconnected pillars simultaneously:

Identify: This is about strategic clarity. Which business problems are worth solving with AI? Where will you get the biggest bang for your buck? Without this foundation, you're just throwing technology at random problems. I've watched companies waste millions on impressive AI solutions that solved problems the company didn't actually have.

Educate: Even the best AI strategy fails without people who can execute on it. We strongly believe in building internal capability: equipping your teams with the skills, tools and mindsets to work effectively with AI. A bottom-up approach is needed to ensure that the AI solutions implemented inside the company will stick over time. One client doubled their ROI simply by investing in proper training alongside their AI development.

Develop: Finally, you need solutions that deliver actual results. This means building AI systems that integrate with your workflows and actually solve your specific business challenges. The key is starting small, proving value, and scaling methodically.

The most successful companies I've worked with realise that these pillars don't operate in sequence - they work in tandem. In other words, your AI strategy determines what skills you need, and which solutions you will build. What you build reveals new strategic opportunities and skill gaps. It's a continuous, reinforcing cycle. And underneath it all, you need a strong educational layer that supports the evolution of AI solutions inside your company.

The companies I've seen struggle the most are those that silo these elements: the strategy team develops plans in isolation, the L&D team runs generic AI workshops disconnected from business goals, and the tech team builds solutions nobody knows how to use. Breaking down these silos is essential for transformation that sticks.

The 6-step playbook to get started with AI... tomorrow

So, that's all great, but... how do you ACTUALLY get started? Here are six steps that you can take this week to get started:

- 01. Issue your AI adoption charter.** Create a one-pager that clearly states what your organisation believes about AI, what's encouraged, and what's off-limits. This provides permission for trying new things while setting clear guardrails.
- 02. Buy best-in-class AI for your core team.** For just \$35/month per user (e.g. ChatGPT Pro, Claude Pro, etc.), this is likely your highest-ROI technology investment this year. Your team deserves best-in-class AI. Don't handicap them with free tools that lack the features driving real productivity.
- 03. Launch an #ai-wins internal comms channel.** Put a spotlight on your team's AI wins. Create a space for employees to share AI workflow success stories. This creates social proof and often drives adoption more effectively than formal training.
- 04. Run a use case identification sprint.** Talk to your departments to uncover workflows with high repetition or structured data. Understand how they work, where they struggle and where AI can support them. Prioritise using this method: Feasibility (can we build it ourselves?), Impact (will it save time/money, or help us better serve our customers?), and Speed (can we pilot within the next month?). Don't overthink this: a two-day sprint can identify dozens of opportunities.
- 05. Prototype fast, scale later.** Choose one high-impact use case and build a minimum viable solution in 2-4 weeks. You are absolutely not building a perfect system - you're proving value to secure buy-in. Outsourcing helps secure quick wins, but long-term success requires simultaneously upskilling internal teams.
- 06. Nominate departmental AI champions.** The people closest to a process are best positioned to improve it with AI. Identify internal employees within each department who can drive adoption at the team level. These champions host tool demos, run workshops, and are in the details of real workflow implementation.





The time to act is now

Remember that confession I hear from most leaders: “I know I need to do something with AI, but I have no idea where to start”? You now have your answer. The systematic approach works, the tools are accessible, and the competitive advantage is real.

The winners in this wave aren't waiting for perfect clarity. They're learning through doing, failing, and doing again. They're starting with a clear strategy, building internal capability, and focusing on delivering measurable results with real implementations.

It is time to get off the sidelines, and into the game.

The promise of AI is lofty, but as we're starting to realise only now, the benefits may actually be much greater than we ever imagined. These six steps are how you capture those benefits and begin your transformation into an AI-first company. And, like most journeys, it begins with your first step.



morningside.ai

Culture that *sticks*

The workplace has transformed dramatically. The pandemic aftermath, persistent talent shortages, and employee expectations are changing the game.



Today, organisations understand that a strong workplace culture isn't optional, it's essential for attracting and keeping top talent.

Four key pillars support this culture: growth, wellbeing, flexibility, and belonging. When thoughtfully integrated, these elements turn organisational culture into a powerful driver of performance and loyalty.

Embracing a growth mindset

Employees want more than a paycheck; they seek progression, purpose, and continuous learning. Effective Learning and Development (L&D) initiatives are crucial for meeting these aspirations. Organisations that create clear career pathways provide employees with a vision for their future, naturally boosting motivation and commitment. By equipping team members with forward-looking skills, companies enhance individual capabilities while strengthening organisational adaptability.

The accessibility of growth opportunities matters just as much as their existence. When development programmes are inclusive and available to all employees, it demonstrates an organisation's genuine commitment to collective growth rather than advancement for a select few. The connection between development and retention is compelling, companies with strong learning cultures typically double their employee retention rates.

Leadership plays a crucial role by championing mentorship programmes that transfer knowledge, facilitating microlearning modules that fit into busy schedules, providing on-demand resources that respect different learning styles, and establishing structured progression plans that give employees confidence in their future.

Cultivating a culture that retains talent

While attractive benefits might initially draw talent in, the underlying culture determines how long they stay. When employees feel deeply connected and committed to their organisation, sharing a sense of belonging and alignment with the company's mission, they develop lasting loyalty that transcends temporary challenges or competing offers.

Today's generation of employees are increasingly sophisticated about distinguishing between stated values and lived reality. They seek tangible demonstrations of organisational values, not just rhetoric on posters or in

handbooks. When companies move beyond words to consistent action, employees develop the trust needed for long-term engagement.

The experience of having meaningful impact coupled with appropriate autonomy creates a powerful combination that enhances job satisfaction and personal investment. Employees who see how their work connects to broader organisational goals, and who have the freedom to approach challenges in ways that leverage their unique strengths, become natural culture ambassadors.

Generational nuances further highlight the importance of authentic culture. Nearly all Gen Zs and millennials prioritise purpose-driven work and express willingness to decline assignments or employers that clash with their personal ethics or beliefs. This represents a fundamental shift in the employer-employee relationship that organisations need to embrace rather than resist.

Prioritising Wellbeing

True commitment to employee wellbeing goes beyond surface-level benefits and occasional wellness initiatives. Meaningful workplace wellbeing begins with thoughtful workload management. Organisations that implement effective strategies to prevent burnout by ensuring manageable workloads demonstrate that they value sustainable performance over short-term productivity spikes.

Creating an environment where mental health discussions are stigma-free and actively encouraged represents another crucial dimension of workplace wellbeing. When leaders model vulnerability and openness towards mental health challenges, it sets a powerful precedent for the entire organisation.

Providing genuine support mechanisms completes this picture. Access to comprehensive Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), designated wellbeing days that employees can take without guilt, and in depth manager training on supporting team mental health all contribute to a culture where wellbeing is woven into the organisational fabric rather than treated as an afterthought.

These wellbeing initiatives deliver multiple returns, they boost productivity and morale while strengthening brand loyalty both internally and externally. A recent survey showed that 81% of employees now expect companies to implement mental health initiatives, reflecting the growing emphasis on psychological safety as a workplace essential rather than a luxury.

The hybrid work landscape

Hybrid work models continue to be a challenge for organisations to manage. Without intentional communication and inclusion strategies, remote employees can quickly feel disconnected from their in-office colleagues. Organisations succeeding in this space make conscious efforts to ensure distributed team members feel as integrated and valued as those physically present.

Equitable access to development and learning opportunities represents another challenge in hybrid environments. Companies must develop systems that provide all employees, regardless of location, with equal opportunities for growth and recognition. This might involve rethinking how projects are assigned, ensuring remote voices are amplified in meetings, and creating informal networking opportunities that work across physical boundaries.

Leadership takes on additional dimensions in hybrid settings. Leaders must actively drive cohesive unity across diverse work settings, serving as bridges between remote and in-person teams. This involves developing new competencies around digital body language, communication, and creating moments of connection despite physical distance.

Organisations finding success in hybrid environments often implement specific practices that strengthen culture across locations. These include hybrid-friendly routines that bring the whole team together regularly, thoughtfully selected collaboration tools that respect different time zones and work patterns, and strategically scheduled in-person interactions that maximise relationship-building during limited face time.

Some examples we have seen in practice that are working well are:

- 01. Regularly monitored 'Team Health' sessions** where hybrid teams reflect on how they're working together, not just what they're working on. This practice promotes shared ownership of team dynamics, encourage honest feedback, and help uncover friction early. The key is consistency: these sessions are short, scheduled, and part of their regular rhythm.
- 02. 'Wins & Learnings' meetings** where team members share a success and a challenge.
- 03. Virtual stand-ups** paired with quarterly in-person offsites to strengthen alignment.
- 04. Hybrid teams** co-create team charters outlining preferred ways of working, including response time expectations, preferred tools, core hours for collaboration, and boundaries for deep work. These aren't dictated top-down; they're co-authored by the team and updated as needs shift.
- 05. Communication norms;** for example Slack is for fast, informal questions. Email is for non-urgent updates.
- 06. Collaboration tools** that respect flexibility and enable teams to avoid unnecessary meetings by defaulting to asynchronous communication. Use tools like Notion for shared documentation, Loom for video updates, and issue-tracking tools like Jira to maintain visibility. Allowing team members to digest updates when it suits their time zone or work rhythm, without losing context.
- 07. Intentional in-person touchpoints** dedicated for key moments like onboarding, team planning, and building relationships. Instead of mandating office days, focus on meaningful reasons to come together, like innovation sprints or team celebrations.



Building culture with *purpose*

Culture isn't merely an accessory to organisational structure, it's the foundation of a high-performing, future-ready workforce.

Forward-thinking leaders regularly assess which of the four key areas: growth, wellbeing, flexibility, and belonging, their culture currently supports well and which need strengthening. They consider what narrative their culture conveys to their people daily through policies, practices, and leadership behaviours.

By addressing these elements thoughtfully, organisations can craft a culture that not only attracts talent but, more importantly, retains and nurtures it. The most resilient cultures don't happen by accident, they result from intentional design, consistent reinforcement, and a willingness to evolve as employee and market needs change.

Hire for capability, *not just confidence*

Too often, hiring decisions are made on gut feel. A candidate interviews well, presents confidently and seems like a great cultural fit, but once they're in the role, it becomes clear that capability doesn't match presentation. Competency-based interviewing (CBI) is one of the most effective ways to avoid this.

When done correctly, it enables hiring managers to cut through surface-level impressions and assess whether someone can truly deliver in the role. Yet, despite its value, it remains underused, or poorly executed across many organisations.

The rise of AI-generated CVs

Another complicating factor: more candidates are using AI tools to help write their CVs.

While this can improve formatting and language, it can also mask gaps in skills or experience, making it harder to distinguish genuinely capable candidates from those who present well on paper.

Interviews, and particularly competency-based interviews, have therefore become even more important. Unlike CVs, interviews require real-time thinking.

Understanding the difference: Behavioural vs. competency-based interviewing

There's an important distinction to be made between behavioural and competency-based interviews. Behavioural

questions explore how someone operates, how they navigate conflict, manage pressure, or collaborate within a team. These are useful for assessing cultural alignment and soft skills.

Competency-based interviewing is designed to assess specific, role-relevant capabilities. It's outcome-driven and evidence-based. Rather than asking what someone would do, you ask what they have done, requiring them to walk you through past experiences that directly relate to the role at hand.

Competency-based interviewing should be a non-negotiable part of any robust hiring process. It provides the evidence hiring managers need to move beyond instinct and make informed decisions, especially in senior or business-critical roles.

It's also the most effective way to differentiate between high performers and those who simply interview well. Confidence and charisma can mask a lack of substance.

Many hiring managers admit they don't always know what to ask. They can articulate what success looks like in the role, but they struggle to design questions that test for it. Without structure, interviews default to surface-level conversation, covering enthusiasm and background, but not drilling into whether the candidate can deliver the outcomes the role demands.



When hiring is treated as a conversation rather than a structured assessment, it's easy to be swayed by presentation over capability. Candidates who speak well and appear composed are often favoured, even if they can't clearly demonstrate the results they've achieved or how they achieved them.

A more targeted approach

Competency-based interviewing requires upfront clarity. Start by defining what the role is meant to achieve. Then break that down into the key competencies that will enable those outcomes, whether it's change management, stakeholder engagement, strategic planning, or commercial execution.

From there, build questions designed to draw out real examples. For instance:

- **Leadership:** "Tell us about a time you led a large team through a significant transformation. What were the key challenges and how did you approach them?"
- **Decision-Making:** "Describe a decision you made with incomplete information. What was the result and what did you learn?"
- **Strategic Influence:** "Give an example of when you had to convince internal stakeholders to support a project they were initially hesitant about. What was the outcome?"

These are not hypotheticals. They test a candidate's ability to apply their experience to situations directly relevant to your business.

CBI shouldn't replace other elements of your interview process. It should complement them. A strong process blends behavioural insight, competency-based rigour, and where

appropriate, practical case studies.

In senior hiring, asking candidates to present a 100-day plan, assess a set of data, or walk through a strategic recommendation can provide deep insight into how they think, plan, and prioritise. But even then, those exercises need to be underpinned by evidence-based questioning to validate experience and performance history.

The role of specialist recruitment partners

Experienced recruitment partners can add real value here, not just in sourcing talent but in shaping and guiding the interview process. From helping define competencies to preparing interview panels and candidates, the role of a recruiter is increasingly about enabling better hiring decisions, not just introductions.

We also see patterns across industries and functions. We know where candidates typically struggle to provide evidence. We anticipate the follow-up questions hiring managers will want answered. We support the process with reference checks that align with the competencies being assessed, ensuring consistency between what candidates say and what referees validate.

Hiring decisions carry weight. They affect performance, culture, and retention. Relying solely on gut feel or presentation is no longer sufficient. If you want to make the right hire, the person who can not only fit in but perform, you need to ask the right questions, in the right way.

02.

Accounting Market Insights

*From the desks of
Jason Hinton and
Chris Cooper*



In this address, we take a closer look at what's really been happening behind the scenes: how hiring decisions are being made, what's shifting in expectations, the growing influence of AI on finance roles, and why candidate confidence is starting to return.

The past year has tested even the most experienced recruiters in the market. At the senior accounting level, hiring has remained relatively stagnant, but not without opportunity. While headlines have focused on caution and slowdown, we've continued to support clients in making key strategic hires, including 25 CFO placements over the past 12 months.

These roles weren't necessarily the result of a hot market, they came from clients who understood the value of acting decisively, trusting the process, and backing Hunter Campbell to deliver at the highest level.

Interestingly, more businesses are trying to recruit themselves in the first instance, something we haven't seen to this extent in the past. Some roles have drawn 300–400 applicants, breaking application records. But quantity hasn't always translated into quality. In some of the less business-critical roles, we've seen a noticeable drop in standards, with companies opting to "take the best of what's there."

In many cases, we've been engaged partway through to take over the process, or to run a structured search in parallel.

Salaries have largely plateaued in accounting, following a two to three year run of significant inflation. That correction was expected and in many cases, overdue but it's contributing to the wider hesitancy we're seeing in hiring activity.

The rapid evolution of AI is starting to show real impact, particularly in transactional accounting roles. We're seeing a clear shift in the skills employers are prioritising. Where roles once focused on data entry speed or system specialisation, the emphasis now is on problem-solving, adaptability, and the ability to work alongside evolving technologies.

Early adopters at all levels, from those newly qualified to senior finance leaders are automating repetitive tasks and freeing up time to focus on genuine value-add work. AI is changing the way finance teams operate, and those who lean into it are carving out a distinct advantage.

That said, many businesses are still hesitant to implement formal AI policies or strategies. But individual adoption is growing rapidly and those who are proactive are already

seeing the benefits.

After a long period of underinvestment in core finance systems, we're seeing an uplift in demand for finance professionals who can bridge the gap between accounting and technology. Many businesses are now upgrading general ledger and ERP systems or rolling out reporting and BI tools catching up after several years of holding back due to tight budgets and lean teams.

The shift toward systems and process optimisation is real, and the demand for accounting professionals with hands-on implementation experience is rising fast.

While 2024 has been quieter in terms of job movement, we have seen a shift in the first half of 2025. Across 2022 and 2023, we saw significant churn. Then the market paused. Now, we're seeing early signs of a return to natural movement, people who've been in roles for two or three years are beginning to look again.

For many businesses, this will be the year where retention strategy is truly tested. The organisations ahead of the curve already have clear retention plans in place for their top performers.

We're already having more conversations with candidates who are open to change, not for the sake of it, but because they're ready for their next step.

The Hunter Campbell team

One of the things we're most proud of is the consistency and depth of our team, a rarity in our industry and that stability puts us in a strong position to support our clients as the market picks up again.

There's a sense of alignment from our client base that we're past the bottom of the curve. And while caution remains, there's growing confidence that the second half of 2025 will continue in the right direction.

We're ready. The team is engaged, resourced, and connected and we're looking forward to what's next.

Jason Hinton & Chris Cooper
Partner - Contract & Manager; Accounting - Permanent

The Modern *CFO*

Today's CFO is expected to be a strategic partner to the CEO, a driver of enterprise transformation, a leader in innovation, and a key influencer across every part of the business.

- By Chris Cooper



A broader and more strategic role

Modern CFOs are no longer seen as the guardians of the balance sheet alone. They are expected to have a strong command of operational drivers, customer dynamics, market risks, and growth opportunities.

In a typical week, a CFO might shift between reviewing sales performance, contributing to capital investment decisions, challenging go-to-market strategies, overseeing technology implementation, and ensuring the business remains compliant in a changing regulatory landscape.

The Hunter Campbell Mood of the CFO 2024 report confirms the increasingly complex reality: CFOs today must be agile, commercially savvy, and able to influence a wide range of business priorities outside traditional finance.

This evolution demands a deep working knowledge of operations, technology, HR, and customer engagement, not necessarily at an expert level, but certainly enough to lead conversations, challenge assumptions, and shape strategy.

Technology as a core competency

Technology is no longer a “nice to have”, it’s central to how modern CFOs drive better decision-making and business outcomes.

According to the Mood of the CFO survey, around 44% of businesses reported they are already using AI, with another 31% either researching or planning to implement AI initiatives.

Current adoption focuses mainly on language tools, task automation, and meeting transcription, but there is significant opportunity to move beyond basic administrative use and into areas like financial forecasting, risk management, and strategic decision support.

The CFOs who are already embedding AI and advanced analytics into their finance teams are gaining faster insights, reducing manual processing times, and freeing up internal resources for higher-value work.

Looking ahead, AI will play a critical role in how CFOs manage risk, optimise performance, and shape the future capabilities of their teams. Getting comfortable with technology, and building teams that can leverage it, will be non-negotiable.

Workforce strategy: Finding the new balance

Another key theme from the Mood of the CFO survey is the shift in hybrid working expectations. Over the last year, 41%

of businesses reported employees were returning to the office more often, reflecting a gradual recalibration of what flexible work looks like.

Yet flexibility remains a critical factor for attraction and retention, especially for top finance talent.

CFOs are actively involved in shaping new hybrid models that balance collaboration, innovation, and wellbeing. The focus is less on rigid mandates and more on creating environments where teams feel connected, supported, and able to perform at their best wherever they are working from.

Talent development as a strategic imperative

One of the clearest signals from both market activity and the Mood of the CFO findings is that CFOs must now take a much stronger role in developing their people. Finance teams need new capabilities, not just technical accounting skills, but data literacy, strategic thinking, communication, and adaptability.

Forward-looking CFOs are prioritising career pathway conversations, building structured learning programmes, and ensuring the next generation of finance leaders are equipped to succeed.

What it takes to succeed as a Modern CFO

Success for CFOs today hinges on four key capabilities:

- **Strategic agility:** Being able to shift focus quickly, connect the dots across disciplines, and guide executive discussions toward the broader business objectives.
- **Technology fluency:** Not necessarily coding or building systems, but understanding how digital tools like AI and analytics can reshape finance and business performance.
- **People leadership:** Building, retaining, and developing finance teams that can thrive in a rapidly changing business environment.
- **Enterprise partnership:** Acting as a true co-pilot to the CEO and Board, influencing outcomes across sales, operations, risk, and talent, not just finance.

If you are a CFO and would like to take part in the 2025 Hunter Campbell Mood of the CFO survey 2025, register your details here:



The value of reconnecting with *Kiwi Accountants* abroad

New Zealand's accounting talent market is under increasing pressure.

Since the onset of COVID-19, New Zealand has experienced a net migration loss in the accounting profession. More accountants have left the country than returned, and despite recent headlines about strong net migration overall, very few of those arrivals are qualified accountants.

To make matters more challenging, the Big Four and mid-tier firms, long the training ground for future finance leaders, have significantly scaled back headcount. In the past 12 months alone, more than 500 accounting roles have been cut, according to recent NBR reporting. That's not a small shift, and it's causing a ripple effect through the entire profession.

The result? A tighter, leaner pipeline of accounting talent and a growing gap in the market.

A shrinking talent pool

Accounting teams are often described as pyramid-shaped. At the top: CFOs and finance leaders. At the base: early-career transactional accountants.

But with fewer young people entering the profession, reduced training pathways, and a steady stream of qualified accountants heading offshore for their OE, that pyramid is narrowing from the bottom up. And once that talent leaves, there's no guarantee it comes back.

For New Zealand businesses, the impact is already being felt.

CFOs tell us they're finding it increasingly difficult to hire, not just at the senior level, but across the full spectrum of finance roles.

And while the unemployment rate has ticked up nationally, those entering the market are not accountants. In short: there are fewer accountants to go around.



Why London Matters

For many years, we've invested heavily in on-the-ground networks in New Zealand, including our Financial Controller network, CFO Breakfast Forums, and the Hunter Campbell Future CFO Programme. But the candidate channel our clients consistently value most is returning Kiwi talent, accounting professionals coming home after gaining overseas experience.

That's why, since 2019, we've made it a priority to go to London every year.

Every trip helps us deepen our connection with Kiwi accountants living abroad, understand their motivations for returning, and map out the right opportunities for when they do.

We also have the opportunity to advise them on how to navigate their careers whilst in London. We want to ensure the roles they take on enhance their skill sets, ensuring they fit seamlessly back into the New Zealand workforce when, or if, they return.

The results speak for themselves: returning candidates are often placed into high-impact roles quickly, with little time

spent on the market. They are highly sought after, and for good reason. They bring a blend of global experience, local understanding, and fresh energy.

In the past 12 months, we've worked with six times as many Kiwi candidates in the UK compared to previous years. Engagement is growing, and the appetite to come home is rising, especially as economic conditions shift and personal priorities realign.

This year, we're heading back to London and our aim remains the same: to meet talented Kiwi accountants, understand their goals, and help them return home with clarity and confidence. We're not just building a database, we're building relationships that deliver value to both candidates and clients.

In a market where great accounting talent is becoming harder to find, reconnecting with our offshore Kiwi community has never been more important.

And for our clients, especially CFOs trying to plan ahead, these returning professionals may well be the key to unlocking the next phase of their team's success.



Why ERP systems implementations succeed... *or don't*

Over the past 12 months, we've noticed many of the CFOs and business leaders we work with are either emerging from a major systems implementation or about to begin one. We had a chat with two of these CFOs to share their insights.

Whether it's a full ERP, reporting tool or BI, these projects are no longer just the domain of IT. They're business-wide transformations with significant implications for people, process, and performance. And while the potential upside is huge, better visibility, scalability, and efficiency, the reality is that many implementations fail to deliver. Or, at least, they don't deliver what was promised.

So what separates the success stories from the ones that quietly fizzle?

Technology is the easy part

One thing comes through clearly in every implementation story we've heard: the system itself is rarely the issue.

Most modern platforms are robust, well-tested, and more than capable of meeting a business's needs. What's harder and more often where things unravel is getting executive team alignment, clarity, and buy-in from the business.

When implementations are driven purely by IT or by a single department, and the rest of the business is "along for the ride," the result is usually frustration. The system ends up reflecting old processes that no longer serve the business, or creates more work for people instead of less.

It's not a tech project. It's a business transformation.

The most successful implementations treat the project as a change programme, not a software install. That means:

- Involving end users early and often, not just at the training stage.
- Getting clear on the real business problems the system is solving.
- Being honest about the internal capability needed to make it successful.
- Making tough calls on process redesign, rather than just replicating what's always been done.

It also means asking the hard questions up front: Do we have the internal leadership to drive this? Are we resourced properly? What's our appetite for short-term pain in exchange for long-term improvement?

Implementation partners matter, but so does your team

An experienced implementation partner or externally sourced project lead is critical. But even the best partners can only go so far without a clear, committed client-side team.

Several CFOs we spoke to said they underestimated the internal effort required. Others noted that when responsibility sat with someone who didn't have the authority or bandwidth to lead, things stalled.

One business had to restart after nine months when it became clear that the project manager didn't have the mandate to drive change across departments. Another shared that their biggest breakthrough came when they appointed a full-time internal lead, backed by the executive team, who could focus entirely on the project's success.

Don't "go live and forget"

A final point we heard again and again: Go-live is not the finish line. In fact, the period after go-live is when the real work begins, supporting people through change, adjusting processes, and continuously improving the system as the business learns to use it.

Treating go-live as the end point is one of the biggest contributors to underwhelming results. The businesses that got real value kept refining, adjusting, and building adoption long after the system was technically "live."

At Hunter Campbell, we work closely with finance leaders at every stage of transformation, from team structure and capability planning through to finding the right people to lead or support these projects.

We've included two case studies from CFOs who've recently been through major system implementations. Their experiences offer practical advice for those at the beginning of the journey, and validation for those navigating the tough middle.

Because while every project is different, the themes are consistent: Get aligned. Build capability. Back your people. And don't expect the system to do the work for you.

Case studies

Case study - MediaWorks

Mike Asbridge – CFO

When MediaWorks set out to unify their ERP systems, the goal was clear: bring multiple platforms across TV, radio, and outdoor into one central system. The business had been operating with different systems for different divisions, creating complexity and inefficiencies. They needed a single source of truth and consistent processes across the board.

Selection process

NetSuite was chosen as the ERP platform. The decision was relatively straightforward based on functionality and value. But it was the choice of implementation partner that took more consideration.

“We knew from experience that the sales team and the actual implementation team aren't always the same,” says Mike. “So we made sure to lock in the individuals who'd actually be doing the work as part of the contract.”

They went through a formal RFP process and ultimately chose CloudZone One, not just because they had the capability, but because they had boots on the ground in New Zealand and were willing to spend time on site.

Resourcing

The project was led by an internal project manager already familiar with the business, supported by specialist contractors. Key internal team members were moved onto the project and their roles were backfilled.

“We wanted people involved who were going to be around long-term. People who understood the business and would have to use the system once it went live. That helped with ownership and decision-making.”

Lessons learned

The system went live on 1 January, right in the middle of year-end. Looking back, Mike says that timing made things harder than they needed to be.

“Avoid going live at year-end if you can. You've got a lot of crossover in the team working on both, and it just adds pressure.”

Another challenge was the timing of a pending finance team restructuring. It was rolled out just before go-live, but in hindsight, they would've been better to launch the system first and restructure afterwards to avoid duplication and confusion.

The project came in largely on budget, took a bit longer than expected, and despite a few bumps, has delivered what the business needed: a well-functioning and consistent ERP that supports the organisation day-to-day.



Case study - My Food Bag

Anoushka Hatch – Previous Financial Controller

The business had grown rapidly under founder ownership but was still running MYOB, a system that hadn't kept pace with scale or complexity. With private equity backing and IPO ambitions, the priority shifted to implementing a more robust ERP that could meet investor and operational expectations.

There was no predetermined system in mind. Instead, the team ran a full selection process and ultimately chose a cloud-based food and beverage ERP solution that aligned with the sector's needs and their future growth plans.

Selection process

A governance group was established from day one, with the CFO taking ultimate ownership. Key business leaders and board members were involved in decision-making, alongside a dedicated, full-time project manager hired specifically for her deep ERP implementation experience.

Superusers from each division were also brought into the selection process, using a structured set of evaluation criteria to assess system options and implementation partners. As Anoushka notes, "Finance teams naturally had more exposure to ERP systems, so their weighting probably carried more influence, which meant the outcome worked well for finance, but needed balance operationally."

Resourcing

A key factor in the project's success was the decision to bring in an independent project lead with no ties to ERP vendors or

day-to-day business responsibilities. "She was solely focused on what was best for our business," says Anoushka. "Having that level of objectivity made a huge difference in keeping the project on track and aligned with our goals."

At the outset, the team identified key users from each division and aligned part of their remuneration to the success of the project. This helped build buy-in and accountability. However, in hindsight, they would have backfilled several of those roles earlier. "People were doing two jobs at once. We brought in extra finance resource later in the project, but doing that earlier would've helped keep timelines tighter."

Lessons learned

The implementation was ultimately successful, and the project came in close to budget. However, shifting business needs introduced complexity. The company moved from a rigid product catalogue to a much more flexible one mid-project, something the ERP system hadn't originally been scoped to handle.

"Scope changes cost money and time. When your business is evolving fast, it's hard to lock in everything up front, but that's where planning really matters," Anoushka says.

"I recommend getting an independent project lead with no BAU responsibilities. Someone who can be 100% focused on delivery. And give yourself more time than anyone tells you you'll need, because you'll need it."

Salary Guide - *Accounting*

Accounts Payable

Accounts Payable Officer	\$65,000 - \$75,000
Senior Accounts Payable	\$75,000 - \$85,000
Accounts Payable Manager	\$85,000 - \$110,000

Over the past year, the volume of Accounts Payable roles has declined, while the number of applications has noticeably increased. This has created a more competitive environment for jobseekers, with employers able to be more selective in their hiring decisions. As a result, candidates now face greater pressure to stand out in a crowded market. The focus for employers has shifted away from traditional metrics like years of experience and processing speed. Instead, there is growing demand for candidates who are adaptable, comfortable with new technologies, and capable of solving problems and improving processes within evolving finance environments.

Accounts Receivable

Accounts Receivable Officer	\$65,000 - \$75,000
Credit Control/ Senior Accounts Receivable	\$75,000 - \$90,000
Accounts Receivable/ Credit Manager	\$90,000 - \$130,000

The last 12 months has seen a shift in the Accounts Receivable and Credit Control market toward dual-function roles. Team sizes are reducing, and versatility is key, as businesses place greater emphasis on doing more with less people, process optimisation and effective cash flow management. Salaries in this space have remained stable, with little movement despite market pressures. There is a growing emphasis on candidates who can support process improvements and adapt quickly to system changes, as companies streamline their receivables functions. While the volume of roles has also remained relatively steady, application numbers have increased and the quality of candidates who fit this new mould is limited.

Assistant Accountant

Graduate	\$55,000 - \$60,000
Accounts Assistant	\$60,000 - \$75,000
Assistant Accountant	\$70,000 - \$85,000

Over the past year, demand for Assistant Accountants in New Zealand has remained steady, with businesses showing a clear preference for experienced candidates over recent graduates. Those actively working through their CA or CPA qualifications are particularly sought after. There is a growing expectation for these professionals to be in the office more regularly, especially compared to AP/AR roles. Similar to AP/AR roles, employers continue to expect candidates to have strong systems knowledge, adaptability, and problem-solving skills. The role of the Assistant Accountant continues to evolve beyond traditional responsibilities, there is now greater involvement in monthly reporting and analysis that typically would have fallen within the remit of a qualified Accountant.

Payroll

Payroll Officer	\$70,000 - \$80,000
Senior Payroll/Sole Charge	\$80,000 - \$100,000
Payroll Manager	\$100,000 - \$140,000

The Payroll market in New Zealand has experienced a drop in job volumes over the last 12 months, with application numbers noticeably lower than other areas within the Accounting Support space. A significant number of businesses have invested in new payroll technology, and a number of Payroll specialists have moved into the Payroll/ HRIS implementation space throughout this period. The pipeline of new talent entering the payroll profession remains limited, contributing to ongoing skill shortages. While salaries have remained relatively stable, employers continue to compete for experienced professionals by offering flexible working and development opportunities. Payroll remains a specialised area where the right blend of technical and compliance expertise is highly valued.

Qualified Accounting - Permanent

Part Qualified Accountant	\$80,000 - \$100,000
Financial & Management Accountant	\$95,000 - \$120,000
Group Accountant	\$110,000 - \$140,000
Financial/Commercial Analyst	\$90,000 - \$130,000
Finance Business Partner	\$130,000 - \$180,000
Finance Manager	\$130,000 - \$160,000
Financial Controller	\$160,000 - \$220,000
Commercial Manager	\$180,000 - \$220,000
FP&A Manager/Head of FP&A	\$160,000 - \$240,000
Head of Commercial Finance	\$220,000 - \$300,000

The year kicked off strongly, with January bringing more senior-level opportunities to market than expected. However, this momentum quickly slowed, with activity becoming patchy and unpredictable in the months that followed. While widespread restructures have eased, some businesses are still making selective headcount reductions to manage costs. Despite ongoing economic uncertainty, more senior candidates are open to new roles, particularly those involving transformation, leadership, or commercial impact. Systems and technology projects have surged, creating strong demand for candidates with experience leading implementations. That said, salary growth has flattened, with remuneration holding steady since mid-2023.

Head of Finance/CFO

Head of Finance/ GM Finance/Finance Director	\$180,000 - \$250,000
CFO (Start Up)	\$200,000 - \$250,000
CFO (SME)	\$250,000 - \$350,000
CFO (Large Enterprise)	\$350,000+

Over the past 12 months, there has been a noticeable slowdown in the volume of CFO and Head of Finance roles coming to market. While opportunities haven't disappeared altogether, the frequency of new openings, particularly at the permanent level, has been more limited than in previous years. Salaries for these roles have remained largely steady. We've seen a handful of first-time CFO opportunities within smaller businesses offering base salaries in the low \$200,000s, though these have been difficult to fill due to a mismatch between salary levels and expectations around the calibre of candidate desired. There is still a clear preference among hiring organisations for experienced CFOs who have 'been there and done that', rather than taking a chance on someone stepping into the role for the first time. Almost all CFO briefs still call for candidates with a strong technical foundation, often Big 4 trained, combined with proven commercial and strategic capability.

We're also seeing a rise in CFOO positions, reflecting the growing breadth of the modern CFO role. Encouragingly, the candidate pool at this level remains strong, and we've made several successful placements across both first-time and experienced CFO profiles.

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03.

Financial Services Market Insights

*From the desk of
Daniel Turner*



As a team focused on the financial markets, the past 12 months have been among the most challenging in our near 11-year history.

Pre-COVID, we saw consistent year-on-year growth in job vacancies. Post-COVID, hiring accelerated sharply, largely driven by the wave of finance professionals leaving New Zealand and the difficulty in securing local talent. But the past year has been a different experience altogether.

Despite the slowdown, FY2025 brought many positives. We expanded our client base, adding several notable NZX-listed entities, businesses looking for a long-term, strategic recruitment partner.

With the continued outflow of talented Kiwis heading offshore, we once again travelled to London to connect with returning professionals. This has become a key differentiator for our clients, and we've continued to invest heavily in a programme that consistently delivers high-quality talent.

Internally, we're proud of how we've navigated the year, staying focused on what matters most: our people. We faced a tough market head-on and used it as a catalyst to strengthen the business, rolling out a company-wide learning and development programme. As conditions improve month by month, we're emerging stronger, more capable, and more aligned than ever.

Looking forward, not back

Many of our clients used the past 12 months to fine-tune systems and processes and procedures, laying foundations for the next phase of growth. Even in tough conditions, opportunities emerged.

In the private equity space, a number of clients saw the downturn as a chance to sharpen their edge. The ability to hire well in a tight market often defines long-term success, and we've seen first-hand how the right finance hire can unlock significant value.

We also saw demand for corporate finance contractors, particularly in businesses pursuing consolidation or acquisition strategies. These short-term hires brought in the specialist skills required to execute.

In private wealth, we saw strong demand for experienced and credible advisors, individuals who've seen market cycles before and can demonstrate consistent performance over the medium term, and individuals that could communicate effectively to their client base, to put them at ease knowing their capital was in good hands.

The year ahead

We're already seeing the market shift. Job opportunities are increasing, and client sentiment is improving. More businesses are re-engaging and looking to plan ahead, often asking for guidance on remuneration and talent availability before going to market.

Demand for offshore talent remains strong, with many employers planning mid-year headcount increases to align with returning Kiwis. But the pressure on local talent pools is far from easing. Departures continue; London, Sydney, and Melbourne remain the top destinations and as more experienced professionals leave, the gap in the mid-to-senior space grows wider.

Returners are coming back with broader experience and understandably higher expectations around compensation, something clients need to plan for if they want to remain competitive.

We're optimistic about the year ahead. Demand is rising. Markets are stabilising. Sentiment is shifting in the right direction. And once again, we're helping great businesses find and hire exceptional people.

Daniel Turner
Manager, Financial Services

Leading through change:

How to support your people in times of uncertainty

Periods of transformation test the strength of an organisation, not just its business model, but its leadership, culture, and ability to hold people together when certainty is in short supply.

Many businesses are navigating restructures, internal realignments, and reorganisation following the volatility of the past 18 months.

While these changes are often necessary, they create an emotional undercurrent that can't be ignored: employees either lean in, or start looking for a way out.

Leading through change isn't about having all the answers. It's about how well you communicate, how consistently you support your people, and how you preserve a sense of trust even when the future feels unsettled. The steps you take during these periods will have a direct impact on employee retention. When employees perceive that they are well-informed and that sincere consideration has been given to their futures, their resulting loyalty contributes significantly to improved retention rates.

Why change is unsettling

Change at an organisational level often triggers fear at an individual level.

Uncertainty about job security, future roles, or company direction creates anxiety. That anxiety, left unaddressed, often prompts employees to consider their options elsewhere.

Restructures, even when positive for the business, disrupt trust. People worry about losing their place in the

organisation, changes to reporting lines, missing out on career progression, or seeing promised initiatives quietly shelved. When employees feel they are no longer part of a shared future, engagement drops and once that happens, it's difficult to regain trust and momentum.

Understanding the emotional impact of change is the first step to leading effectively through it.

Where companies often go wrong

Even with the best intentions, businesses often stumble during times of change.

Common mistakes include:

- **Lack of transparency:** Trying to shield employees from reality breeds more speculation and fear than the truth ever could.
- **Poor communication and delays:** When updates are slow or vague, uncertainty fills the gap, assumptions are made and people imagine worst-case scenarios.
- **Pausing development, promotions, and bonuses:** In challenging times, many companies pull back on discretionary initiatives. While understandable, these decisions send a clear signal that opportunity and recognition are off the table, damaging morale just when you need it most.



Leadership during change isn't about perfection. It's about staying visible, staying human, and making sure your team doesn't feel forgotten.

Supporting different levels of the business

Change impacts different parts of the workforce in different ways and leadership must be ready to meet people where they are.

Junior staff

Younger employees often need reassurance that growth and learning opportunities aren't disappearing. Maintaining access to training, mentorship, and new challenges sends a strong message that their career development still matters. For many, this will be their first exposure to significant change.

Management (exclusive of SLT/Executive members)

Management often carry the heaviest burden during transformation, responsible for delivering results, supporting their teams, and adapting to new structures, often with limited support themselves. Recent data shows that 52% of Gen X workers don't want to step into middle management roles, citing stress and lack of recognition as key reasons.

Leading, not just managing

In times of change, culture, engagement and communication are everything. It's not enough to 'manage' through uncertainty. The real goal is to lead, to create a working environment where people still feel connected, valued, and clear about the road ahead, even if every detail isn't fully mapped out yet.

Change done well can actually strengthen a business. Handled poorly, it creates lasting damage to trust, loyalty, and culture. The difference lies in how leaders show up for their people when it matters most.

What great companies do differently

Businesses that lead well through change focus on consistency, honesty, and maintaining as much certainty as possible.

Some of the most effective approaches include:

- **Consistent, honest communication:** Even when you can't share everything, say what you can. Acknowledge the uncertainty, but also reinforce commitment to the team and the business's long-term success.
- **Protect promotion cycles and bonus structures where possible:** It's a powerful way to demonstrate that growth, recognition, and investment in people remain priorities.
- **Offer clarity:** Be clear about goals, timelines, and performance expectations. Unclear targets breed frustration and disengagement.
- **Prioritise wellbeing:** Proactively address stress and change fatigue. Bring in external speakers, host resilience sessions, and give employees practical tools to manage their wellbeing.

The rise of the *Corporate Strategist*: Your internal secret weapon

As businesses face another cycle of disruption the demand for top-tier strategic thinking has increased significantly.

External consulting firms, including the likes of McKinsey, Bain, and BCG (the MBBs), and the 'Big Four' (KPMG, PwC, EY, and Deloitte) among others are in high demand for their specialist expertise. They are however, expensive and external advisors take time to come up to speed.

In response, many organisations are turning their focus inward. Rather than relying solely on external support, companies are building internal strategy teams and the role of the corporate strategist is becoming one of the most critical in the business.

The growing trend

There's a clear trend emerging: companies are investing in building internal strategy functions rather than defaulting to external support. While external consultants still have a key role to play, particularly for specialist expertise or major transformation, businesses increasingly see the value in having a permanent capability that understands the business that can be deployed where needed promptly.

Internal teams offer continuity, cultural understanding, and faster alignment with leadership priorities. They can also support long-term input and strategic execution, over an individual piece of work delivered at a moment in time.

For many organisations, bringing top strategy talent in-house is not just about cost, it's about control, agility, and building real competitive advantage.

Strategy's value in tough times

When markets tighten, businesses need clarity and agility. Strategy teams move from being nice to have, to absolutely essential.

Since early 2024, organisations have leaned heavily on internal strategy functions to manage:

- Cost-out programs without damaging long-term capability.
- M&A activity, including direction and identification, due diligence, and integration planning.
- Competitor analysis to identify new market opportunities.
- Long term planning.
- Transformation initiatives.
- Macroeconomic changes including risk planning related to geopolitical shifts, economic growth, inflation, and unemployment.

Having this expertise in-house shortens decision-making cycles, ensures advice is tailored to the company's specific context, and saves significant cost compared to outsourcing every major project to external consultants.

What a great corporate strategist brings

Exceptional corporate strategists offer something external consultants often can't: a true end-to-end view of the business. They live inside the organisation's realities, understand its nuances, can navigate the different personalities, and know where the opportunities and the roadblocks really lie.

The best strategists combine deep analytical capability with strong interpersonal skills.

They don't just work with data, they work with people. They listen, challenge assumptions, build consensus, and move plans into action.

Over time, a strong strategist becomes a trusted advisor to the CEO and executive team, someone who can pressure test decisions, model scenarios, and help shape the future of the organisation from the inside out.

Traits of Top Corporate Strategists

The skill set required to thrive in an internal strategy role is distinct. It goes beyond technical analysis to include leadership, influence, and commercial acumen.

Top strategists typically demonstrate:

- **High EQ and IQ:** They are intellectually strong but equally capable of reading a room, building relationships, and managing stakeholder dynamics.
- **Board-level communication skills:** They can translate complex problems into clear, persuasive narratives that drive executive decision-making.
- **Practical execution focus:** They know that strategy without execution is meaningless. Top strategists design plans that can actually be delivered and they help the business stay accountable to them.
- **Adaptability:** They can adapt and pivot quickly, to shifting priorities, personalities, and market conditions.
- **Further education:** Most pursue higher education and hold an MBA/Masters/CFA or similar.



Salary Guide - *Financial Services*

Corporate Finance, Advisory

Analyst	\$70,000 - \$90,000
Senior Analyst	\$90,000 - \$125,000
Manager	\$125,000 - \$150,000
Senior Manager	\$150,000 - \$175,000
Associate Director	\$175,000 - \$200,000
Director	\$200,000

Over the past 12 months, companies in the corporate finance and advisory space have navigated a period of volatility which has impacted hiring and compensation. In the midst of this, we've continued to see a steady outflow of advisory professionals from New Zealand. In response, employers are exploring various retention strategies, such as promoting high-performing individuals earlier than usual. While these promotions come with incremental salary increases, they often serve more as a tool to delay departures rather than prevent them entirely. The current environment is marked by salary stagnation, reflecting a more cautious and measured approach amid uncertain market conditions.

Corporate Treasury (non-bank Treasury)

Analyst	\$70,000 - \$95,000
Senior Analyst	\$95,000 - \$130,000
Manager	\$130,000 - \$165,000
Senior Manager/Assistant Treasurer	\$165,000 - \$200,000
Treasurer	\$200,000+

Following a period of heightened activity last year, the demand for treasury roles in the New Zealand market has eased over the past 12 months. The earlier surge was largely driven by a pressing need for additional funding during a more uncertain economic period. However, as the urgency around funding pressures has stabilised, hiring activity has returned to more typical levels. This softening in demand has had a stabilising effect on salaries. While there was some upward movement in remuneration, particularly at the Manager level and above during last year's peak, compensation across most treasury roles has since plateaued. Analyst and Senior Analyst salary levels, in particular, have remained in line with previous years.

Corporate Strategy/Corporate Development/Corporate Finance

Analyst	\$70,000 - \$100,000
Senior Analyst	\$100,000 - \$140,000
Manager	\$140,000 - \$170,000
Senior Manager	\$170,000 - \$225,000
Head of	\$225,000 - \$280,000
General Manager	\$300,000+

Over the past 12 months, corporate finance and strategy teams have operated within an increasingly cost-conscious environment. Many organisations have shifted their focus from growth to efficiency, placing a strong emphasis on cost control and internal optimisation. Despite the sustained workload and complexity of the projects these teams are managing, this has not translated into upward movement in compensation. Salaries and total remuneration packages have largely remained flat, particularly within companies that have undergone rounds of restructuring. The current climate of budget constraint means that even high-performing teams are not necessarily seeing financial recognition. In response, many companies are looking to offer more exposure and career progression as a way to retain and reward talent.

Market/Credit/Liquidity Treasury Risk

Analyst	\$60,000 - \$90,000
Senior Analyst	\$85,000 - \$135,000
Specialist	\$120,000 - \$155,000
Manager	\$135,000 - \$160,000
Senior Manager	\$155,000 - \$220,000
Head of	\$180,000 - \$240,000
General Manager	\$240,000+

Salaries across market/credit/liquidity and treasury risk have remained relatively stable in line with the reduction of hiring we have seen over the past 12 months. Following successive years of steady increases, modest increases have been observed, which has been a welcome shift for employers competing for top talent. Although salaries have stabilised, there is an increasing focus on rewarding high-performing individuals, acknowledging the crucial role these professionals play in managing complex financial challenges.

Operational Risk

Analyst	\$55,000 - \$85,000
Senior Analyst	\$85,000 - \$120,000
Manager	\$110,000 - \$150,000
Senior Manager	\$150,000 - \$190,000
Head of	\$180,000 - \$210,000
General Manager	\$220,000 - \$300,000+

While there has been no significant salary growth in the operational risk sector over the past year, the demand for skilled professionals remains steady. Salaries in New Zealand have seen moderate increases, as a consequence of a number of factors including the evolving regulatory environment, technological advancements, and talent shortages. These factors are contributing to a competitive job market, which in turn has led to moderate growth which we see continuing in 2025 and beyond.

Technology Risk

Analyst	\$60,000 - \$90,000
Senior Analyst	\$85,000 - \$130,000
Specialist	\$120,000 - \$165,000
Manager	\$130,000 - \$170,000
Senior Manager	\$150,000 - \$210,000
Head of	\$190,000 - \$250,000
General Manager	\$220,000+

Technology Risk remains a key area of growth within the Risk and Compliance sector. Over the past few years, many teams that previously lacked dedicated technology risk specialists have started to build out their capabilities. While demand continues at a steady pace, it is one of the few areas where salaries are still rising, though not at the levels seen last year. Despite challenging economic conditions, compensation for these roles remains competitive due to the specialised skill set. Technology risk positions also offer a valuable entry point for overseas candidates looking to enter New Zealand. These professionals often bring experience from markets with more advanced risk maturity.

Financial Crime (AML/CFT & Fraud)

Analyst	\$50,000 - \$85,000
Senior Analyst	\$70,000 - \$100,000
Team Lead	\$90,000 - \$120,000
Manager	\$110,000 - \$150,000
Senior Manager	\$150,000 - \$180,000
Head of	\$170,000 - \$200,000
General Manager	\$200,000+

Financial Crime remains one of the most competitive sectors for job seekers within Risk and Compliance. The landscape for Financial Crime professionals continues to evolve, driven by constantly changing regulations that have sustained steady demand for talent. Significant upcoming regulatory shifts are expected to further increase activity. Given the steady demand and relatively shallow talent pools, salaries and compensation packages have become a key tool to attract and retain skilled professionals. As the sector continues to expand, the talent pool is likely to grow, which will contribute to the stabilisation of salaries. For the time being, however, with demand high, salaries are on the rise.

Regulatory Compliance

Analyst	\$65,000 - \$120,000
Senior Analyst	\$100,000 - \$130,000
Specialist	\$120,000 - \$140,000
Manager	\$125,000 - \$155,000
Senior Manager	\$160,000 - \$180,000
Head of	\$170,000 - \$240,000
General Manager	\$240,000

Regulatory Compliance salaries have seen steady growth over the past year, driven by sustained demand for skilled professionals. This growth has outpaced general wage increases, highlighting the specialised expertise required in these roles. The most significant salary increases have occurred in the financial services sector, where large banks and insurers, the dominant employers, continue to fuel upward pressure on compensation.

Internal Audit

Analyst	\$75,000 - \$110,000
Senior Analyst	\$100,000 - \$130,000
Manager	\$120,000 - \$170,000
Senior Manager	\$165,000 - \$190,000
Head of	\$180,000 - \$230,000
General Manager	\$220,000+

Salaries for internal audit professionals have remained relatively stable over the past year. Incremental salary increases have been observed across various levels, from entry-level auditors to senior and managerial roles. With demand not increasing notably, and with a mature talent pool, salary growth will be incremental and in line with inflation. While salary growth has been limited, the profession offers job security and opportunities for career advancement as the profession evolves, which are appealing factors for professionals.

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04.

Sales & Marketing Market Insights

*From the desk of
Sindy Ward*



The sales and marketing talent market in New Zealand is entering a new phase. After a long stretch of economic uncertainty and business realignment, we're beginning to see clear signs of renewed momentum.

Confidence is returning. Recruitment activity is picking up. But so too are the challenges: higher application volumes, the risk of rushed or reactive hiring, continued mid-level attrition, and the ongoing question of how to get remote and hybrid models working sustainably. These are the issues leaders are now grappling with as they look to rebuild and grow.

The latest Mood of the Sales Leader report captures the sentiment of this nuanced environment.

Yes, there's optimism. But it's measured. Only 39% of organisations reported revenue growth in the past year, the lowest figure since the survey began.

Ongoing economic pressures, tighter client budgets, and elongated decision-making cycles continue to weigh on performance. Leaders are optimistic, but no one is underestimating the work ahead.

That said, many businesses are already adapting. Strategic workforce planning, clear employer branding, and a seamless candidate experience are no longer just 'nice to have', they're defining advantages in a competitive hiring market. When hiring processes stall or feel disjointed, the risk isn't just an unfilled role. It's the damage to reputation, candidate experience, and future engagement in a small, well-connected market like ours.

For job seekers, the market feels different. There are fewer unsolicited calls. More competition. Higher expectations.

What stands out now isn't just experience. It's clarity of intent, a genuine point of difference and the ability to articulate value in a way that resonates.

Candidates who invest in defining their brand, understanding where they add the most value and aligning themselves with the right opportunities will be in the strongest position to succeed.

The employers winning talent right now are doing a few key things well:

- They're creating visible, meaningful career pathways.
- They've built leadership cultures that people want to be part of.
- They're rewarding performance, not just financially, but through development, flexibility, and purpose.

They've also acknowledged that today's talent expects more than a title and a pay cheque.

People want to work somewhere they believe in and where they can see a future.

This year's Market Insights also looks beyond talent. We've included perspectives on how businesses are tackling broader transformation, whether that's rebuilding brand relevance, implementing smarter CRM strategies, or embedding agility into the way they plan and deliver change.

Technology remains central. AI, data and CRM platforms are reshaping the way sales & marketing teams operate. But the message from leaders is clear: tech is an enabler, not a substitute. Relationships still matter, so does leadership. The most successful businesses are those that invest in both.

At Hunter Campbell, we've been evolving alongside the market. Our Sales & Marketing division, now operationally led by Erin Donkin, continues to grow in both capability and reach. Backed by a team of six specialist consultants, we support clients across FMCG, Technology, Industrial, Engineering, Retail, and Professional Services to hire exceptional talent and shape high-performing commercial teams.

I continue to focus on servicing the executive leadership market through search and recruitment as well as growing strategic partnerships for the Hunter Campbell business.

Our People & Culture practice is also going from strength to strength. This is a space we care deeply about, and one our directors have always championed. We believe that culture, leadership and engagement are critical drivers of sustained business performance and we're proud to help our clients build the capability they need to grow with confidence.

Looking ahead, the businesses that succeed will be those that blend agility with discipline.

They'll embrace innovation while staying grounded in fundamentals: strong leadership, clear values and operational focus.

We hope the insights in this report support your planning, prompt useful conversations, and help you navigate the next phase of growth with clarity and intent.

And as always, we look forward to supporting you along the way.

Sindy Ward
Director

Picking up the pieces

How Sales and Marketing teams are future-proofing success post-recession

- By Erin Donkin

The economic challenges of the past few years forced many businesses into a defensive posture: tightening budgets, delaying investment, and recalibrating priorities.

Now, as market conditions improve, a different mindset is emerging. Sales and marketing teams are no longer just trying to recover, they're focused on future-proofing their success.

We are seeing clear shifts in the market: a wave of newly created roles designed to strengthen sales execution and marketing performance, fresh approaches to retention, and a renewed commitment to career development.

Here's where leading businesses are investing to stay ahead:

New roles shaping the sales and marketing market

Sales operations roles on the rise

Across FMCG, technology, and services sectors, the demand for sales operations professionals is growing rapidly. Businesses understand that sustainable revenue growth depends not just on having strong salespeople, but on creating the structures, processes, and strategies that allow them to perform at their best.

Sales operations teams are being tasked with lifting the lid on existing sales strategies, analysing what's working, and what isn't, and bringing new thinking to drive better execution.

Their impact is tangible: aligning sales activities more closely

with business goals, improving forecasting accuracy, and removing friction points in the sales cycle.

In a competitive market, where market share is hard won, the ability to optimise and refine the sales engine is becoming a critical differentiator.

Marketing's digital evolution

On the marketing side, digital roles are surging. Companies are investing heavily in social media, content marketing, and performance marketing expertise.

The focus is clear: reaching audiences with the right message, at the right time, through the right channels, and doing so in a way that is measurable and ROI-driven.

Rather than relying on generic, one-size-fits-all campaigns, businesses are doubling down on creating bespoke, engaging content that cuts through a crowded digital landscape.

Performance marketing roles, in particular, are bridging the gap between marketing and sales, driving lead generation, acquisition, and ultimately revenue growth.

The emphasis on digital marketing isn't a short-term trend. It's a fundamental shift in how businesses connect with their audiences and track the effectiveness of their efforts.



Innovative retention strategies: holding onto your best people

As the market picks up, the competition for top talent is intensifying. Attracting good people remains important, but retaining high performers has become even more critical.

Forward-thinking companies are taking proactive steps to strengthen retention:

- **Extra annual leave and wellness days:** more businesses are embedding additional leave into their employee value propositions (EVPs), sending a strong message about valuing wellbeing, not just productivity.
- **Flexibility tailored to individuals:** rather than rigid policies, businesses are maintaining open conversations with employees about what flexibility looks like for them, striking a balance between bespoke arrangements and clear company-wide guidelines.
- **Company connectivity:** team days, end-of-month catch-ups, and low-cost offsites are being prioritised to maintain a sense of culture, connection, and momentum, particularly important in hybrid and flexible working environments.

Retention isn't being left to chance. Businesses are recognising that small, consistent efforts to foster loyalty and engagement make a big difference over time.

A renewed focus on Learning and Development

If the past few years have taught businesses anything, it's that adaptability and growth mindsets are non-negotiable. We are seeing a renewed focus on Learning and Development (L&D), not as a "nice to have," but as a strategic priority.

Clear career pathways are increasingly seen as essential for motivation and retention. Employees want to know that their employer is invested in their future, and they want practical opportunities to develop the skills they'll need to succeed.

Importantly, L&D doesn't need to be complicated or expensive. Small, regular initiatives are proving highly effective:

- Lunch-and-learn sessions that break development into digestible pieces.
- Workshops on relevant, timely topics that teams can apply immediately.
- Attendance at relevant conferences to expose teams to new ideas.
- Bringing in external speakers to share expertise and spark innovation.

The key is to keep the conversation about growth ongoing. Career pathways should not be vague promises, they should be discussed, planned for, and supported with tangible learning opportunities that employees can see and feel.

CRM strategy that delivers results

*Dougal Macdiarmid
GM Technology
Indicator*



Too many businesses are still treating their CRM like a glorified address book. I regularly speak with leaders who've invested in sophisticated systems but are only scratching the surface of what they can do. A well-set-up CRM should be a strategic driver of growth, not just another tech platform gathering digital dust.

There's also still a lingering belief that CRMs are expensive and painful to implement. That's simply not true anymore. Many modern systems are intuitive, fast to deploy, and built to keep up with how teams actually work today.

Another big shift? CRMs are no longer just for sales. More and more, we're seeing businesses use them across HR, supply chain, customer service, and beyond, recognising that customer relationships touch every part of the organisation.

Three common CRM strategy challenges

After working with numerous organisations on CRM implementation and optimisation, I've seen three key challenges consistently arise:

1. Selecting the right partner

Choosing the right partner is the crucial first step in a successful CRM journey. It's not about finding a one-size-fits-all solution but rather identifying a partner whose expertise and offering align with your specific business needs, size, and budget.

Effective approaches include:

- **Define your "why" and user needs first:** Clearly articulate your CRM objectives. What outcomes are you targeting? Who are the primary users, and what are their workflows? This guides partner selection.
- **Look beyond the tech:** A great CRM partner understands sales processes, change management, and ongoing support, not just the platform.
- **Consider different use cases:** Recognise varied needs across your organisation, from sales pipeline to customer service. Ensure your partner understands and prioritises these.

2. Implementation challenges

The initial enthusiasm following CRM selection often encounters resistance during implementation. This critical phase determines whether the system will deliver on its promise or become an underutilised investment.

Effective approaches include:

- **Prepare your business:** Involve key stakeholders early to shape system configuration.
- **Get your team excited:** It's not just software, it's change. Clear communication, training, and support are vital. Identify champions to drive adoption.
- **Learn from common pitfalls:** Poorly defined goals, low user engagement, and CRM-process misalignment are common issues. Address them early.

3. Driving effective utilisation

The most significant missed opportunity is not the selection of an inappropriate system, but rather the underutilisation of a well-chosen one.

Key actions include:

- **Leadership must lead:** Leaders need to champion CRM use. Referencing CRM data in decisions sends a clear message. Disengaged leaders create disengaged users.
- **Tailor it to daily work:** Integrate CRM into user workflows. Custom dashboards, mobile access, and relevant reports help drive adoption.
- **Use your data:** Analyse CRM insights on sales performance, customer behaviour, and pipeline health. Let the data guide improvement.
- **Tap into AI:** CRM platforms are releasing AI tools weekly. Features like lead scoring, forecasting, guided actions, and time-sensitive insights can supercharge your CRM's impact.

Optimising your CRM isn't something you finish, it's something you do continually. Business needs change. Teams evolve. Technology advances. Your CRM strategy needs to adapt alongside all of this. The companies seeing the best results treat their CRM as a central engine for business growth, constantly tuning, adjusting, and maximising its capabilities across their entire organisation.



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Where Marketing Teams are Investing in 2025

*Duncan Shand - Founder & Chief
Executive Officer, YoungShand*

After three to four years of restriction, uncertainty, and cautious spending, New Zealand businesses are finally turning a corner.

Following two years of Covid disruption, and a post-pandemic hangover that brought the sharpest recession since 1991, we appear to have hit bottom around September or October last year. Since then, the market has slowly but steadily shifted gears into a more optimistic and growth-oriented phase.

That's not to say it's easy out there. The macro environment is still full of risk. President Trump is campaigning again, geopolitics remain unstable, and Northern Hemisphere leaders seem determined to keep things unpredictable. But here at home, the signs are becoming hard to ignore: our terms of trade have lifted on the back of strong commodity prices, business and consumer confidence are trending upward, interest rates are easing, and inflation is slowly being brought under control (even if the price of butter and cheese hasn't quite followed suit). Add in the rebound in tourism, a resilient job market and a government that's keeping a steady fiscal hand, and the outlook for 2025 and 2026 is increasingly positive.

So, what does this mean for marketers? In short: it's time to start investing again - but more strategically than ever. The last few years have forced marketing leaders to do more with less. Now, as budgets begin to unlock, the smartest brands are investing not in "more marketing," but in better marketing. We're seeing four clear areas where this is happening:

1. Invest in brand clarity – not just awareness

In tighter markets, clarity beats noise. It's no longer enough to be visible; you need to be relevant, differentiated, and understood. We're seeing a renewed focus on brand strategy - not full rebrands, but sharpening of positioning, proposition, and messaging so that everything from digital banners to boardroom decks speaks the same language.

When marketing teams are aligned around a clear brand story, everything downstream becomes easier: creative becomes more consistent, media spend becomes more efficient, and internal stakeholders become more supportive. It's not just about building awareness, it's about ensuring your brand is known for the right things.

2. Invest in connected communications – brand & performance, working as one

The false divide between brand and performance marketing is finally being put to rest. Forward-thinking teams are building integrated platforms that deliver both: brand storytelling that also converts, and performance campaigns that also build equity.

This means tighter collaboration between media and creative teams, more consistent messaging across channels, and a

focus on ideas that can stretch from TikTok to trade comms to TV. The goal is coherence and effectiveness, not channel-first thinking. We're seeing smart marketers rebriefing work to ensure the top and bottom of the funnel are aligned, and holding agencies accountable for delivering creative that sells and builds.

3. Invest in digital infrastructure – built around the customer journey

Many organisations now realise they've overinvested in digital tools, but underinvested in integration. In 2025, the focus is shifting to stitching together the ecosystem: ensuring that websites, CRM platforms, paid media, and offline channels are working in sync around a clear customer journey.

This means investing in platforms that are user-friendly and adaptable, not just technically robust. It means making sure your first-party data strategy is actually driving segmentation and personalisation. And it means ensuring your digital infrastructure is enabling better customer experience, not just better reporting.

4. Invest in people – driving marketing productivity

This last area wasn't in my original top three (and the team at Hunter Campbell didn't ask me to include it), but it's one I think is vital. If there was ever a time to upgrade your team, it's now. Investing in smart, high-performing people across key roles is one of the most powerful ways to drive marketing impact.

The right talent brings fresh energy, fresh perspective, and momentum for change. Marketers who can work cross-functionally, particularly with senior management, and demonstrate marketing's commercial value will be critical this year. Combine that with people who can smartly leverage AI and martech to boost productivity, and you've got a team built for this next phase of growth.

Final thoughts

Marketing is no longer about choosing between brand and performance, or between awareness and conversion. In 2025, it's about doing both. The marketers who will win in this new phase are those who invest smartly: with clarity, with connection, and with the customer at the centre.

Now's the time to shift from survival mode to strategic mode and make sure your marketing spend is building the brand and the business.

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Salary Guide - Sales & Marketing

Sales Leadership

Head of Sales Capability/Excellence	\$160,000 - \$190,000
GM Sales/ Head of Sales	\$180,000 - \$200,000
Sales Director	\$200,000 - \$250,000
General Manager	\$220,000 - \$300,000

Sales leadership remains critical for business growth and market adaptation. While vacancies are low, demand for strategic and operational sales leaders is strong. Organisations seek those who can lead high-performing teams and optimise sales processes while navigating complex markets. As tech and data integration increase, today's leaders need both interpersonal skills and digital fluency. Although base salaries have stayed stable, incentives for revenue growth have become more structured and lucrative. Sales leaders must now drive long-term growth while meeting immediate performance goals.

Sales Management

Regional Sales Manager	\$130,000 - \$150,000
B2B Sales Management	\$120,000 - \$160,000
National Business Manager	\$150,000 - \$170,000
National Sales Manager	\$170,000 - \$200,000

Salaries in sales management have risen due to increased focus on daily operations to drive growth and market share. Demand has remained steady, with businesses prioritising business development capability. Competitive pay is used to attract talent, especially in high-demand sectors like tech, engineering, and FMCG. These roles saw a 5-10% year-on-year salary growth. Candidates with strong industry networks and expertise in segmentation and planning are in demand.

Account Management

Junior Sales Executive	\$60,000 - \$75,000
Account Executive	\$65,000 - \$90,000
Account Manager	\$85,000 - \$110,000
Key Account Manager	\$110,000 - \$135,000
Export - Account Manager/ Market Manager	\$120,000 - \$140,000
Export Marketing Manager	\$130,000 - \$160,000

B2B Account Managers now focus more on data interpretation than relationship management. Key Account Managers are expected to be independent and analytical, even in large teams. Hiring has become more rigorous with added assessments like case studies and 360-degree referencing. Employers seek long-term fits who align with evolving client needs. Export Market Managers are back in demand, especially in the primary sector, dairy and meat have seen a notable spike in hiring. The shift reflects a renewed appetite for long-term growth in core sectors.

Business Development

Entry Level/ Graduate/ Outbound Phone Sales	\$60,000 - \$75,000
Technical Business Development	\$75,000 - \$150,000
Business Development Manager 2-5 years experience	\$95,000 - \$120,000
Business Development Manager 6+ years experience	\$120,000 - \$160,000

Despite economic challenges, demand for skilled BDMs remains high. Outbound strategies are back, with face-to-face networking and consultative selling gaining traction. Salaries and incentive schemes continue to grow, especially for proven sales hunters. Top candidates balance human connection with smart tech use. Still, pressure from a tight economy and high living costs are pushing some away from cold sales. Employers must offer more than commission, career growth, flexibility, and purpose are now key to retaining and attracting high-performing BDMs.

Field Sales

Sales Merchandiser	\$55,000 - \$65,000 \$25 - \$30 P/H
Sales Representative	\$60,000 - \$75,000
Territory Manager	\$70,000 - \$90,000
Area/Regional Sales Manager	\$100,000 - \$140,000
National Field Sales Manager	\$150,000 - \$190,000

Field sales roles now require strong CRM and data analytics fluency. AI tools are reshaping customer engagement with more predictive and personalised interactions. Businesses are also shifting away from company vehicles, favouring car allowances and fuel cards to increase transparency and sustainability. Hybrid and electric vehicles are on trial across several firms. In FMCG, many businesses are outsourcing field sales to banners or third parties. This trend demands tight oversight to ensure outsourced teams meet brand standards and business objectives.

Category Management

Category Executive	\$75,000 - \$100,000
Activations Manager	\$90,000 - \$120,000
Category Manager (Supplier & Retail)	\$110,000 - \$150,000
Shopper Marketing Manager	\$120,000 - \$145,000
Trade Marketing Manager	\$90,000 - \$135,000
Head of Category/Trade Marketing	\$150,000 - \$180,000

Retail scan data tools like Nielsen, Quantum, and Circana are becoming essential in supplier-side category management. FMCG companies are investing in data-savvy hires to enhance promotion visibility and negotiation outcomes. Some firms are launching graduate programs to grow analytics talent, who can move into sales, finance, or planning. Top candidates with strong internal engagement skills are commanding premium pay. In retail, category management salaries remain flat amid team consolidations and restructures, as large retailers focus on efficiency and broader margin control.

Sales Support

Customer Service Representative	\$60,000 - \$75,000
In-bound Sales Consultant	\$65,000 - \$80,000
Sales Coordinator	\$70,000 - \$85,000
Sales Analyst	\$70,000 - \$100,000

Support roles in sales and marketing have expanded, reflecting more integrated sales operations. Digital literacy, initiative, and cross-functional thinking are key hiring criteria. These roles are now vital for enablement, offering career development and a pathway to advancement. With tenures averaging 2–3 years, employers focus on recruiting high-calibre talent early. Flexible work, travel allowances, and clear progression plans help attract top candidates. Efficient recruitment, clear team vision, and a 'meet the team' step are increasingly used to secure the best hires.

Marketing Generalist

Marketing Coordinator	\$55,000 - \$75,000
Marketing Executive	\$75,000 - \$95,000
Marketing Specialist	\$95,000 - \$120,000
Marketing Manager	\$120,000 - \$170,000
Head of Marketing	\$160,000 - \$190,000
Marketing Director/CMO	\$180,000 - \$220,000

Mid-to-senior generalist marketers remain in demand for hands-on campaign execution and strategy. AI is reshaping content creation, requiring upskilling. Influencing stakeholders, navigating transformation, and adapting to automation are key skills. Marketers must address social responsibility and ethical branding, with data-led decisions driving ROI. Companies want professionals who connect messaging with market needs and align with sustainable practices. While bonuses are not yet widespread, some senior marketing roles now include incentives, often tied to both personal performance and company success.

Communications Specialist

Junior 1-3 years' Comms Experience	\$60,000 - \$80,000
Mid 3-6 years' Internal Comms Experience	\$80,000 - \$130,000
PR Manager/ Event Manager	\$80,000 - \$120,000
External Comms/ Media Relations	\$90,000 - \$150,000 \$50 - \$100P/H

The Communications job market is experiencing notable shifts. While private sector roles remain relatively stable, the public sector, traditionally a stronghold for communications professionals, is undergoing significant contraction. Government-wide austerity measures have led to widespread job cuts across various ministries, including communications departments. This has intensified competition for remaining positions and dampened salary growth in public roles. Conversely, private sector opportunities, particularly in Auckland, continue to offer steady prospects in both internal and external communications jobs. The main trends we've seen are communications functions like PR, Media, Events etc. are being blended into more well-rounded and strategic roles. Professionals are increasingly prioritizing job security and flexibility, with many seeking roles that offer remote work options and clear career progression paths into broader marketing positions. This evolving landscape underscores the importance of adaptability, networking and continuous skill development in AI methodologies.

Brand Management

Brand Assistant/Marketing Assistant	\$60,000 - \$70,000
Assistant Brand Manager	\$70,000 - \$90,000
Brand Manager	\$90,000 - \$120,000
Senior Brand Manager	\$120,000 - \$140,000
Group/Global Brand Manager	\$140,000 - \$180,000

Brand Manager and Senior Brand Manager roles in New Zealand are continuing to evolve as FMCG and retail businesses grow their market presence. While the scope and strategic importance of these roles have increased, salaries have remained largely stable over the past 12 months. Customer expectations around sustainability and ethical sourcing are increasingly influencing how brand strategies are developed and executed. Candidates with proven capability in these areas are in demand. There is ongoing demand for Brand Managers with manufacturing experience, particularly those who have successfully launched new products. The rise of digital marketing continues to shape the role. Brand Managers are now expected to effectively connect with their audiences across platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn.

Product Management

Product Assistant	\$55,000 - \$70,000
Product Specialist	\$75,000 - \$110,000
Product Manager	\$110,000 - \$160,000
Senior Product Manager	\$140,000 - \$180,000
FMCG Innovation Manager	\$140,000 - \$180,000

The product management space remains robust, particularly technical product management in industrial, manufacturing, and technology sectors. Demand for subject matter expertise as well as analytical ability in experienced professionals continues to drive steady salary growth. Product management roles at all levels, have a continued focus on holistic strategies encompassing pricing mechanics, innovation and bespoke offerings for customer market segments. New product development is back on the agenda for businesses as investment in is injected to focus on new verticals and revenue streams. Project management and internal stakeholder management skills for product management roles are under tight scrutiny during hiring processes.

Insights and Data

Research Analyst/ Insights Analyst/ Data Analyst/ Pricing Analyst	\$65,000 - \$110,000
Insights Manager/ Data Manager	\$100,000 - \$140,000
Strategy Manager	\$140,000 - \$170,000
Head of Insights & Strategy	\$160,000 - \$200,000

Businesses are placing greater expectations on insights and data roles to deliver compelling narratives that influence decision-making, not just report on patterns and trends. There's been a clear shift toward more strategic, commercially focused thinking, with an understanding of overall business strategy now expected at every level. The talent pool with these capabilities remains tight, with mid-level professionals often moving to Australia or the UK. As a result, salaries have seen a moderate lift. Cost pressures and inflation have also driven demand for pricing analysts, revenue growth analysts, commercial sales analysts, data leads, and insights managers. There's increasing investment in elasticity and demand modelling capabilities, and AI adoption is a growing focus. More role briefs are specifically requesting experience with implementing or working alongside AI tools.

Performance Marketing/E-commerce

SEO Specialist	\$80,000 - \$110,000
Performance Marketing Specialist	\$90,000 - \$120,000
Performance Marketing Manager/ Customer Experience Manager	\$120,000 - \$160,000
Head of Digital & E-Commerce	\$160,000 - \$190,000

Despite tighter budgets and hiring freezes, demand for performance marketing, SEO, and e-commerce expertise remains strong. Businesses continue to value the measurable impact these roles deliver, prompting a rise in on-demand models using freelancers and agencies. Hybrid marketers with both technical execution and data-driven decision-making skills are highly sought after, as are those who can collaborate across sales, product, and CX. AI is reshaping workflows, from campaign automation to predictive analytics, making AI literacy a critical capability. A steady recovery in demand for digital marketing talent is anticipated.

Digital/Content Specialists

Content Writer/Content Specialist	\$60,000 - \$110,000 \$30 - \$75 P/H
Social Media Manager	\$90,000 - \$130,000
Head of Social / Head of Content	\$140,000 - \$170,000

Content marketing is vital as online research and short-form storytelling influence buying decisions. Businesses seek specialists who create value-driven, multi-channel narratives. Mid-to-senior roles face intense competition due to restructures and flat salaries. Employers are promoting internally, outsourcing, or expanding current roles. Demand for junior hires is steady, with a focus on future-proofing teams. Hybrid marketers who blend creative and data-driven skills are in demand. Sales collaboration is key, as content teams are expected to build assets that drive pipeline and performance.

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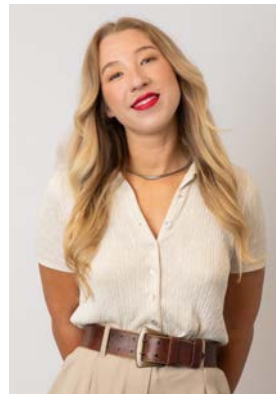


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05.

Supply Chain, Operations & Procurement Market Insights

*From the desk of
Wayne Fry*



There's no denying that the past 12 to 18 months have been tough. New Zealand's supply chain sector has felt the weight of sustained economic pressure, ongoing recession impacts, and geopolitical uncertainty.

Procurement and supply chain leaders have had to adjust quickly, navigating shifting demand patterns, increased cost pressure, and tighter margins. In many organisations, austerity has taken the form of "sinking lid" policies, where employees who exit are not replaced. While we haven't seen widespread redundancy programs, particularly in government procurement, headcount has declined quietly. The result is leaner teams under more pressure.

Early signs of a reset

We've also seen a shift in senior hiring. COO and senior supply chain leadership placements increased by 12% in 2024 compared to 2023. These hires are often early signals that businesses are preparing for growth, with executive teams positioning for a better market in the second half of FY25 and into FY26.

Confidence is returning, and with that comes a series of important questions for business leaders:

- Do you have the right people in place?
- Are your systems, processes, and structures fit for purpose?
- Can your supply chain adapt to a more complex, tech-enabled environment?
- Are you ready to move from austerity into opportunity?

What's shaping the year ahead

1. Technology and automation are changing the game

We're seeing a continued rise in automation as companies look to optimise operations and reduce reliance on manual processes. The adoption of generative AI is also picking up pace, particularly in demand planning, risk management, cost negotiation, and predictive maintenance. These technologies are enabling more resilient and responsive supply chains, and they're reshaping what capability looks like across roles.

Employers are increasingly seeking supply chain professionals with a working knowledge of digital platforms, automation tools, and advanced analytics. Roles in logistics, inventory management, and supplier engagement are evolving, and the talent brief is evolving with them.

2. Sustainability is back on the agenda

After taking a back seat during the height of economic uncertainty, ESG and sustainability have returned as key priorities, particularly for organisations dealing with government contracts or export markets. Companies are once again focused on reducing emissions, improving transparency, and embedding ethical sourcing into their supply chains.

3. Job seekers are re-engaging

After two years of limited movement, professionals are re-entering the market. Many have delayed career changes due to uncertainty, but with renewed optimism, they're now looking for growth, development, and more support.

Candidate movement is expected to be a major trigger for hiring momentum in FY25/26. As strong people leave, organisations will look to replace them, creating knock-on effects across the market.

What this means for employers

Now is the time to look at your team. Many organisations have delayed backfilling roles, restructured teams, or postponed projects due to cost constraints. But those same projects, ERP rollouts, supplier strategy work, value-add process improvements are being restarted. The people doing the work will need support.

Key considerations:

■ Retention strategy matters more than ever.

Professionals are reassessing their options. If you haven't got a plan in place, now is the time. Not just flexible work, but real development, meaningful work, and clear recognition.

■ The skills gap is real.

While hiring has been subdued, gaps have remained hidden. As hiring picks up, they will re-emerge quickly. Getting ahead of this now could be a major competitive advantage.

■ Don't underestimate returning confidence.

Candidates are more open to movement. If you don't have clear value to offer, someone else will.

It's been a demanding period, but there are strong indicators that the supply chain sector is turning a corner. Businesses are preparing for growth, but doing so with caution and intent.

For employers, the opportunity lies in being proactive: Investing in the right people, shaping the right structures, and retaining your key talent before the market moves too fast.

Wayne Fry
Manager, Supply Chain, Operations & Procurement

Talent shortages in New Zealand's *Supply Chain Sector*

New Zealand's supply chains have been under pressure for several years, grappling with global disruptions, rising costs, and a constantly shifting business environment.

One of the toughest challenges facing supply chain leaders is the shortage of skilled talent.

From warehouse teams to senior leadership, workforce gaps are impacting productivity, slowing innovation, and increasing operational risks across the country.

This article looks at what's driving the shortage, the knock-on effects for businesses, and how organisations are responding.

What's driving the talent shortage in New Zealand?

Small talent pool

New Zealand's limited population naturally restricts the number of professionals available across supply chain functions. Competition is fierce, sectors like agriculture, logistics, manufacturing, and technology are all chasing the same people, especially those who can deliver insights through data, drive strategy, and add real commercial value at senior levels.

Border closures and immigration gaps

The COVID-19 pandemic effectively froze the flow of skilled migrants for more than two years. While borders are open

again, the immigration pipeline hasn't fully recovered. The shortage is being felt everywhere, from frontline logistics roles through to specialist technical positions.

Ongoing brain drain

Skilled professionals continue to leave for higher salaries and bigger career opportunities offshore, particularly in Australia. Retaining mid-career talent remains a challenge, despite businesses offering bigger salary packages and better benefits.

Labour shortages in key roles

Critical shortages persist across truck driving, warehousing, demand and supply planning, business development in freight, and transformational leadership roles in supply chain. Regional economies, in particular, are feeling the squeeze, they've performed relatively well, but have needed to match big city salaries to attract talent.

Skills gap in digital and analytical roles

As supply chains digitise, there's rising demand for people who can implement systems, manage data, and drive automation. For many businesses, particularly outside of the main centres, finding professionals with these capabilities remains an uphill battle.



The Impact on Supply Chains

Talent shortages aren't just an HR problem, they're hitting operations directly:

Delivery delays and disruptions: a shortage of warehousing and logistics staff slows the movement of goods, causing flow-on effects across manufacturing, retail, and export.

Rising costs: businesses are paying a premium for talent and offering more flexible working arrangements, which adds financial strain.

Operational risk: overstretched and undertrained teams increase the chances of errors, compliance breaches, and health and safety issues.

Digital transformation stalls: without the right skills in place, businesses struggle to improve forecasting, planning, and resilience.

As conditions improve, employers are under pressure to refill these roles. This is expected to drive a fresh spike in demand for supply chain talent through the second half of 2025 and into 2026.

Solving the problem isn't about one silver bullet. It will take a combination of growing talent internally, investing in training and technology, improving retention strategies, and accessing skilled workers from overseas.

As supply chains grow more complex and interconnected, the businesses that prioritise their people, and build the right partnerships to find them, will be the ones that stay ahead.

How NZ businesses are responding



■ Training and development initiatives

Investment in growing internal talent initiatives are largely still in the planning phase. The breathing space to focus on long-term development has only recently started to reappear. We expect to see more partnerships with universities and professional bodies like NZPICS and CIPS, as well as more mentoring, internal coaching, and succession planning.



■ Workplace innovation

Employers are rethinking the employee experience. It's less about offering work-from-home and more about flexibility in hours, wellness initiatives, and creating clearer career pathways to appeal to younger and more diverse talent pools.



■ Technology and automation

Automation is increasingly being used to free up human resources, not just in warehousing, but also in planning and analytics roles, allowing skilled employees to focus on relationships, strategy, and decision-making rather than data entry and reporting.



■ The sinking lid is lifting

Throughout the past few years, many companies avoided replacing supply chain staff who left, quietly redistributing their workload across the team. Those roles were never formally disestablished, they simply remained vacant.

Procurement *redefined*

Procurement's moving target

Over the past five years, procurement has been pulled in every direction. Priorities have swung from cost savings, to pandemic response, to securing supply amid global disruption, to ESG initiatives, and then back to cost management during economic downturn.

The result? Procurement's role, and how it is measured has fundamentally changed. Today, the value procurement delivers is no longer defined purely by cost.

Resilience, sustainability, risk management, continuity of supply, and regulatory compliance are now critical parts of the equation.

The challenge for procurement leaders isn't whether to adapt, it's how to weave all these pressures into a coherent, deliverable strategy while still managing ongoing cost pressures.

Procurement's value needs new metrics

Most companies have broadened their procurement objectives to include resilience, ESG, and risk. But, many are still measuring performance the old way: primarily through cost savings.

Traditionally, success was defined by 'Total Cost of Ownership' and procurement savings. In today's environment, that's too narrow.

Procurement now needs to demonstrate value across:

Resilience: the ability of the supply chain to recover from disruption and maintain service to customers.

Sustainability: integrating ESG principles, tracking carbon emissions, and ensuring ethical labour practices across the supply chain.

Supplier performance: not just on price, but on innovation, compliance, service delivery, and resilience.

New KPIs are needed and not all of them are as clear-cut as a percentage cost reduction. Measuring success in resilience or sustainability often involves subjective judgments, and defining what good looks like can vary by business and sector.

Crucially, procurement leaders must rethink how they report to executive teams and boards. The conversation needs to shift from "what we saved" to "how we've protected and grown business value" across resilience, compliance, sustainability, and risk mitigation.

New KPIs for a new era

Resilience

Track supply chain flexibility, recovery times, and the ability to maintain delivery through disruptions. Focus on DIFOT (Delivery In Full, On Time), adjusted for real-world challenges like lead times, geopolitical risks, and supply bottlenecks.

Sustainability

Embed carbon emissions tracking, ethical labour practices, and transparency requirements into supplier scorecards. Be able to report on these, not just internally but publicly where needed, particularly for customers who demand sustainable and ethical supply chains.

Risk Management

Build proactive frameworks to identify and mitigate risks before they impact operations. This includes predictive analytics, geopolitical monitoring, and market volatility tracking.

Supplier Relationships

Measure collaboration, innovation, and resilience support from key suppliers, not just price and delivery terms. Focus on strategic partnerships that help the business navigate complexity.



Resilience comes at a cost

Building a resilient supply chain costs more in the short term. Dual sourcing, nearshoring, safety stock, these are all real investments. Businesses must accept that resilience requires upfront cost to avoid catastrophic failure later.

For procurement leaders, the challenge is to reframe this conversation.

Higher costs to secure resilience must be positioned as long-term investments, protecting revenue, maintaining customer trust, and reducing operational risk.

Those who continue to view resilience through the narrow lens of cost avoidance will find themselves exposed when, not if, the next disruption comes.

Sustainability and compliance: no longer optional

During 2023/24, ESG initiatives took a backseat to immediate cost pressures.

In 2025, they are back on the agenda, and this time, not just as a “nice to have,” but as a compliance and commercial imperative.

Regulators, investors, and customers are demanding more transparency and higher standards, particularly in global markets like the UK, EU, Australia, and the US.

For New Zealand businesses, this means that ESG performance, including your suppliers’ practices, must meet these higher benchmarks.

Procurement needs to embed sustainability into contracts, supplier evaluations, and day-to-day operations. Tracking tools, real-time monitoring, and clear accountability frameworks will become essential.

Those who treat sustainability as a compliance tick-box rather than a strategic pillar will increasingly find themselves shut out of valuable markets and customer relationships.

Risk management: A strategy, not a reaction

Supply chain disruptions are no longer rare events, they are part of the operating environment. Proactive risk management must become part of procurement’s core strategy.

This shift includes using AI and predictive analytics to monitor supply risks, market movements, political instability, and other early warning indicators. Being able to anticipate disruptions, and prepare accordingly, will define procurement excellence in the years ahead.

Supplier relationships: Strategic, not transactional

Suppliers who were once viewed purely through a transactional lens are now critical partners in resilience, innovation, and sustainability. Leading businesses are formalising strategic supplier programs, selecting key partners to work closely with on co-innovation, digital tracking, and sustainability initiatives.

Supplier collaboration is no longer a bonus, it’s central to achieving the broader business value goals procurement is now tasked with delivering. For procurement teams that are still focused purely on cost-cutting negotiations, the opportunity to drive value through partnership is being missed.

Leaders who embrace resilience, sustainability, proactive risk management, while still keeping an eye on cost, will create supply chains that are adaptable, trusted, and fit for the future.

AI is changing *Procurement and Supply Chains*

The conversation around AI has shifted. It's no longer a futuristic concept sitting on the edge of the procurement and supply chain world, it's happening now, delivering tangible results in businesses across New Zealand and globally.

Leaders who understand where and how to apply AI are already gaining an edge. Here's a look at where AI is having real impact and why procurement and supply chain leaders need to move from curiosity to action.

AI in Procurement

Spend analysis

AI-driven spend analytics tools are taking procurement visibility to a new level. By tracking and analysing purchasing data in real time, AI identifies savings opportunities that traditional manual processes often miss.

It also helps reduce panic or impulse buying, particularly in volatile markets where cost control is critical. Having a clear, data-backed view of where and how money is being spent allows procurement to shift from reactive cost-cutting to proactive value creation.

Risk assessment

Supplier risk management has always been complex but AI has transformed the speed and depth at which it can be assessed. AI tools continuously monitor a supplier's financial health, performance history, geopolitical exposures, and ESG compliance factors, providing real-time risk profiles. This proactive approach enables procurement to spot vulnerabilities early, not after an issue escalates, improving supplier resilience and protecting operational continuity.

Contract analysis

Procurement professionals spend a significant amount of time reviewing contracts for compliance and risk exposure. Natural Language Processing (NLP) technology now automates large parts of this process, scanning documents to flag anomalies, inconsistencies, or non-compliance with contractual standards. This reduces manual workload, shortens contract turnaround times, and significantly reduces the risk of costly oversights.

AI in Supply Chain

Inventory management

Holding too much stock ties up capital. Holding too little risks lost sales. AI is enabling far more precise inventory management by predicting demand patterns based on seasonality, promotions, external market factors, and buying behaviour. It helps businesses maintain optimum stock levels and preserve cash flow without compromising availability.

Predictive maintenance

For sectors like food manufacturing, predictive maintenance is game-changing. AI analyses equipment performance data to identify when maintenance should be scheduled, preventing unexpected breakdowns and costly downtime. Rather than relying on fixed maintenance schedules or reacting after failure, companies can now intervene at exactly the right time.

Logistics optimisation

Fuel costs, vehicle maintenance, and delivery reliability all depend on logistics efficiency. AI-driven route planning tools are helping companies map smarter, faster, and more fuel-efficient delivery routes. Optimising vehicle usage not only cuts operational costs but also improves reliability for customers, a major differentiator in competitive markets.

Tracking sustainability goals

Meeting sustainability targets is no longer just about corporate responsibility; it's increasingly a business requirement. AI systems are tracking energy usage, waste levels, and resource efficiency, giving businesses clear, real-time insights into where improvements can be made. This reporting capability strengthens ESG credentials, supports regulatory compliance, and can influence customer purchasing decisions in increasingly environmentally conscious markets.



Real-world examples of AI in action

AI is already reshaping operations across New Zealand's supply chain and procurement ecosystems. Some local examples include:

- **Fonterra** is using AI for predictive maintenance across its plants, milk quality monitoring, and logistics planning, improving both operational efficiency and product quality.
- **Zespri** has developed AI forecasting tools that help predict crop yields and provide insights for farmers to improve output and resilience.
- **Ports of Auckland** uses AI to optimise crane movements during vessel loading, improving container handling speeds and reducing turnaround times.
- **The Warehouse Group** has deployed AI in demand forecasting, helping to refine inventory management and better align stock levels with customer demand.

These aren't future case studies, they're happening today, proving the business case for AI investment in procurement and supply chain operations.

AI is not a silver bullet, and it won't replace strong procurement and supply chain fundamentals. But when used strategically, it's a powerful tool to enhance decision-making, improve resilience, reduce risk, and support sustainable growth.

Salary Guide - *Supply Chain, Operations & Procurement*

Supply Chain Manager/Director

Junior	\$130,000 - \$160,000
Intermediate	\$180,000 - \$250,000
Senior	\$250,000 - \$500,000+

In 2024, demand for Heads of Supply Chain remained relatively strong despite a subdued labour market. We expect 2025 to see a pickup in the demand for supply chain leaders and executives as businesses are prioritising leaders who can align supply chain with risk mitigation, digital innovation and improving conditions. Organisations seek Heads of Supply Chain with proven capability in end-to-end supply chain leadership, data-driven decision-making, and risk management. As supply chains become more central to business strategy, this role has evolved into a key driver of resilience, efficiency, and growth.

Supply Chain Manager SME

Junior	\$100,000 - \$130,000
Intermediate	\$120,000 - \$160,000
Senior	\$160,000 - \$200,000

In 2025, demand for supply chain managers in New Zealand has risen, driven by improving economic conditions, ongoing global disruptions, digital transformation, and sustainability goals. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular are actively seeking professionals who can streamline operations and enhance resilience through technology and strategic planning. Employers value supply chain managers with expertise in data analytics, digital tools, and sustainable sourcing. The job market reflects a clear shift toward roles that support operational agility and long-term growth.

Sales & Operations Planning Manager

Junior	\$120,000 - \$140,000
Intermediate	\$150,000 - \$180,000
Senior	\$200,000 - \$260,000

In 2025, demand for S&OP Managers in New Zealand has strengthened as businesses place greater emphasis on integrated planning to manage ongoing supply chain complexity. Organisations are increasingly seeking commercially minded professionals who can drive alignment across sales, operations, and finance to support strategic decision-making and improve forecast reliability. There is a clear shift toward hiring S&OP Managers with strong data capability, stakeholder engagement skills, and a proven ability to influence at all levels. As S&OP becomes more embedded in core business strategy, this role is critical in building agile, future-fit supply chains.

Demand Planner

Intermediate	\$70,000 - \$110,000
Advanced	\$110,000 - \$130,000
Leadership	\$130,000 - \$160,000

Hiring activity for demand planners dropped by over 60% in 2023-2024. In 2025 (as economic conditions improve) companies are once again investing in value-add roles, demand planning roles being near the top of the list. 2025 is expected to see a rise in the recruitment of demand planners, particularly in the FMCG and manufacturing sectors. Firms are moving beyond category-level forecasting and want commercially minded planners who interrogate SKU profitability, convert data into actionable insight, and anchor IBP conversations. This has the potential to create a distinctly candidate short market. A capable Demand Planner is likely once again to become an indispensable competitive advantage in 2025.

Supply Planner

Junior	\$85,000 - \$90,000
Intermediate	\$90,000 - \$100,000
Advanced	\$100,000 - \$120,000

From 2023 - 2025, demand for Supply Planners in New Zealand has remained relatively low, as many organisations filled key roles in previous years and redistributed workload internally when vacancies arose. Rather than backfilling immediately, businesses have relied on existing team capacity to maintain supply continuity. However, with increasing pressure on teams, service levels and growing complexity in supply networks, we expect to see a modest uplift in hiring activity as companies look to rebuild planning capability. As vacant roles are gradually refilled, planners with strong ERP skills, inventory insight, and cross-functional collaboration experience will be in increasing demand.

Production Planner

Junior	\$80,000 - \$85,000
Intermediate to Advanced	\$85,000 - \$100,000
Leadership	\$100,000 - \$140,000

Demand for Production Planners in New Zealand has remained subdued in 2025, with many businesses opting not to replace roles, instead redistributing responsibilities within existing teams. This trend has been supported by stable production volumes and a focus on leaner planning structures. However, hiring activity is expected to pick up in the second half of 2025 and into 2026 as production volumes increase across expanded shifts and manufacturing lines. While growth in demand will be modest and relatively slow, businesses will begin rebuilding planning capability, targeting planners with strong scheduling, ERP, and workflow optimisation skills.

Inventory Planner

Inventory Administrator	\$60,000 - \$75,000
Inventory Controller	\$70,000 - \$90,000
Inventory Manager	\$85,000 - \$110,000

In 2025, demand for Inventory Planners in New Zealand has remained relatively low, with many businesses managing vacancies by reallocating responsibilities across existing teams and established inventory managers not looking to move. Stable inventory positions and efficiency gains in forecasting have supported leaner planning structures. However, hiring activity is expected to pick up in the second half of 2025 and into 2026, driven by inventory managers looking for new career moves, increased volumes and the need for improved planning accuracy and tighter control of stock levels. Growth will be gradual, but businesses will look to rebuild capability by hiring Inventory Planners with strong ERP proficiency, analytical skills, and end-to-end inventory management experience.

Master Data

Master Data Administrator	\$70,000 - \$85,000
Master Data Specialist	\$90,000 - \$120,000

Demand for Master Data professionals in New Zealand has remained steady but subdued, with many organisations maintaining lean teams and relying on cross-functional support to manage data governance. As systems stabilised post-implementation, immediate hiring needs eased, and vacancies were often absorbed internally. Looking ahead to the second half of 2025 and into 2026, we expect an increase in hiring as businesses prioritise data integrity to support growth, automation, and supply chain performance. Organisations will seek Master Data specialists, rather than rely on non-specialists or those in a hybrid role, as data management becomes increasingly important and a priority for businesses.

Purchasing Officer

Junior	\$60,000 - \$70,000
Intermediate	\$75,000 - \$80,000
Advanced	\$85,000 - \$90,000

Recruitment for Purchasing Officers in New Zealand has remained fairly static, with many businesses choosing to consolidate purchasing tasks within existing teams (without increasing headcount), or broader supply chain or admin roles. Hiring has been largely replacement-based, with minimal net growth across most sectors. That said, activity is expected to lift gradually in late 2025 and into 2026 as purchasing volumes grow and companies look to relieve pressure on existing teams. Organisations will be looking for Purchasing Officers who can manage purchasing cycles efficiently, maintain supplier performance, and support better stock accuracy.

Purchasing Manager

Junior	\$90,000 - \$110,000
Intermediate	\$110,000 - \$130,000
Advanced	\$130,000 - \$160,000

In 2022, excessive consumer demand meant Purchasing Managers were under significant pressure, sourcing additional stock, onboarding new suppliers, and working at pace to meet customer expectations. Fast forward to 2024, and we've seen two years of subdued market conditions and low recruitment activity in this space. However, as we move into the second half of 2025, demand for experienced Purchasing Managers is expected to rise. With procurement functions now focused on sustainability, supplier risk, and cost efficiency, businesses will need commercially astute leaders who can drive ethical sourcing, enable supply chain transparency, and embed resilience into purchasing strategy.

Head of Procurement/Procurement Manager

Head of Procurement in a Medium Sized Business	\$180,000 - \$220,000
Head of Procurement in a Medium-Large Sized Business	\$220,000 - \$280,000
Chief Procurement Officer - Large Corporate	\$280,000 - \$350,000

The recruitment outlook for Heads of Procurement in New Zealand is expected to remain strong, fuelled by growing supply chain complexity, rising risk management needs, and the increasing importance of ESG and sustainability targets. As procurement moves further into the strategic spotlight, businesses are prioritising senior leaders who can align commercial outcomes with broader business goals. Organisations will be seeking Heads of Procurement with a blend of technical expertise and leadership capability, particularly those experienced in digital transformation, data analytics, and automation. The ability to build resilient, ethical supplier networks and navigate global procurement challenges will be essential in shaping future-fit, value-driven procurement functions.

Procurement Category Manager

Procurement Specialist/ Junior Category Manager	\$85,000 - \$120,000
Intermediate	\$130,000 - \$150,000
Senior	\$150,000 - \$180,000

Demand for Procurement Category Managers in New Zealand remains steady and is expected to strengthen further as businesses continue to navigate supply chain complexity and sustainability pressures. While recruitment activity in 2023 and 2024 softened compared to the post-COVID surge, the underlying need for skilled category professionals, particularly in areas like ICT, professional services, and direct materials, has remained strong. New Zealand's ongoing talent shortage in procurement has prompted companies to look offshore and pivot internally, retraining professionals from finance, sales, and operations. As sustainable procurement, risk mitigation, and supply chain transparency move higher on the agenda, Category Managers who bring strategic sourcing expertise, stakeholder engagement skills, and a deep understanding of ESG priorities will be in high demand throughout 2025.

Procurement Analyst

Junior	\$70,000 - \$80,000
Intermediate	\$80,000 - \$100,000
Senior	\$100,000 - \$120,000

Demand for Procurement Analysts in New Zealand is set to increase after a period where any roles were put on hold, with existing teams absorbing analysis responsibilities internally. As businesses ease the pressure on these teams, investment in dedicated procurement analyst roles is expected to grow, building specialist capability. With ongoing focus on cost optimisation, risk mitigation, and sustainability, organisations will seek analysts who bring strong technical skills and the ability to deliver deep, actionable insights. This renewed emphasis will position Procurement Analysts as vital contributors to more strategic and data-driven procurement functions in 2025.

Procurement Governance

Junior	\$70,000 - \$90,000
Intermediate	\$90,000 - \$120,000
Senior	\$120,000 - \$180,000

Demand for Procurement Governance professionals in New Zealand has been relatively low over the past two years, with limited hiring activity as organisations maintained lean governance structures. However, teams are expected to further specialise, reflecting the growing complexity and regulatory focus within procurement functions. A soft but steady increase in demand is likely in 2025, particularly within larger organisations that are expanding their governance capabilities. Roles with a specific focus on ESG compliance, risk mitigation, and supply chain transparency will be especially sought after as companies strengthen oversight and align procurement with broader sustainability and ethical standards.

Lean Manufacturing/CI

Graduate and entry level role with up to two years experience	\$70,000 - \$80,000
Junior	\$90,000 - \$120,000
Intermediate	\$120,000 - \$150,000
Senior	\$150,000 - \$220,000
Management/Leadership	\$220,000+

Demand for Lean Manufacturing Managers in New Zealand is poised to grow as manufacturers sharpen their focus on operational efficiency and adaptability. Cost reduction and productivity improvements are driving wider adoption of lean principles and continuous improvement methodologies. Skilled Lean Managers are critical in helping businesses stay competitive by streamlining processes and eliminating waste. Sustainability and compliance also play a key role, particularly in sectors like food processing and packaging, where reducing waste and energy use is a priority. With Industry 4.0 technologies accelerating, companies seek Lean Manufacturing Managers who combine technical know-how with strong leadership to successfully embed automation, data analytics, and AI. Given the limited local talent pool, there's increasing interest in sourcing experienced professionals from overseas to boost capability.

Production Manager

Junior	\$80,000 - \$100,000
Intermediate	\$100,000 - \$120,000
Senior	\$120,000 - \$150,000

The market for Production Managers in New Zealand remained relatively static for the past 2-3 years, with limited recruitment activity reflecting a steady labour environment. However, things are starting to pick up as companies prepare for increased production demands and greater operational complexity. New Zealand's strong hands-on culture continues to suit the practical nature of this role, especially in regional primary industries. Despite a limited talent pool, demand for skilled Production Managers is expected to grow steadily over the next 3-5 years, driven by the need for leaders who can boost efficiency and support expanding operations in a strengthening economy.

Maintenance Engineer/Manager

Intermediate	\$80,000 - \$100,000
Advanced	\$100,000 - \$120,000
Leadership	\$120,000+
Senior Leadership	\$140,000+

The need for specialists that can maintain machinery is always going to be in demand. The quest for continuous improvement across an organisation plays a key role in advancing efficiencies that ultimately land on the bottom-line. Maintenance Engineers who understand how planned maintenance fits into the wider process to maximise capacity and throughput; reducing plant downtime and unplanned maintenance, have a bright future in today's current economic environment. We expect demand to remain steady throughout 2025 - 2026 with a slight uplift in demand. The challenge is finding skilled shortages in a talent short environment.

Process Engineers

Junior	\$80,000 - \$110,000
Intermediate	\$110,000 - \$140,000
Senior	\$140,000 - \$180,000

With a forecasted increase in investment in manufacturing and capital, the demand for Process Engineers in New Zealand is expected to remain improve through 2025, with demand consistently outpacing local supply. This shortage is prompting many employers to look offshore for experienced talent, particularly those with exposure to large-scale, advanced manufacturing environments. Key drivers include increased automation, sustainability targets, and the need for greater productivity. Engineers with skills in robotics, data analytics, and green manufacturing processes are especially sought after, particularly in sectors like food, pharma, and materials processing. As operational costs rise, Process Engineers who can optimise systems and reduce waste will play a vital role, making this a highly competitive recruitment space.

Reliability Engineer

Junior	\$80,000 - \$110,000
Intermediate	\$110,000 - \$140,000
Senior	\$140,000 - \$180,000

The demand for Reliability Engineers in New Zealand is expected to rise steadily through 2025, as manufacturers respond to aging infrastructure, economic pressures, and the need for greater operational efficiency. With many plants relying on older equipment, skilled engineers are essential to extending asset life and minimising downtime. As Industry 4.0 adoption grows, the shift toward predictive maintenance and data-driven decision-making is accelerating. Reliability Engineers with expertise in IoT, condition monitoring, and analytics will be highly sought after, particularly in sectors like food processing, heavy industry, and chemicals, where production continuity and cost control remain critical priorities.

CI Manager/ Specialist

Junior	\$90,000 - \$120,000
Intermediate	\$120,000 - \$150,000
Senior	\$150,000 - \$220,000

The demand for Continuous Improvement (CI) Managers in New Zealand is rising as manufacturers focus on boosting efficiency, reducing costs, and adopting lean practices. With increased emphasis on sustainability and regulatory compliance, CI Managers are vital for driving waste reduction and energy efficiency, especially in sectors like food processing and packaging. The integration of Industry 4.0 technologies also requires CI leaders with strong technical and leadership skills. Given the limited local talent pool, and increasing demand, this is likely to remain a skill-short area

Supply Chain Coordinator

Junior	\$55,000 - \$65,000
Intermediate-Senior	\$65,000 - \$85,000

As organisations continue to manage costs and maintain lean structures, the availability of Supply Chain Coordinator roles has remained relatively limited. As confidence returns to the market and business activity picks up, we anticipate renewed investment in these key support positions throughout 2025. With an increasing emphasis on retention, wellbeing, and sustainable team structures, companies are recognising the value of bolstering their supply chain teams with experienced coordinators. As volumes increase and workloads rise, these professionals will be crucial in maintaining momentum and supporting continued operational improvement.

DC Manager

Single Site	\$120,000 - \$140,000
Large-Multi Site	\$140,000 - \$180,000
Regional/National DC Manager	\$180,000 - \$240,000

The outlook for Warehouse and DC Managers in New Zealand is positive heading into 2025, as businesses continue to respond to rising supply chain volumes and the sustained growth of e-commerce. While the market has remained relatively stable, the need for skilled leaders capable of managing efficient, high-performing warehouse operations is expected to increase. Employers are particularly focused on candidates with experience in advanced WMS platforms, automation, and RFID technology, as they look to improve accuracy, speed, and cost-efficiency. Warehouse Managers with strong operational leadership and technical capability will be well-positioned in a market that increasingly values streamlined, tech-enabled distribution.

Warehouse Manager

Intermediate	\$90,000 - \$110,000
Advanced	\$110,000 - \$150,000
Regional	\$150,000 - \$200,000

The demand for skilled Warehouse Managers in New Zealand is expected to grow in 2025, driven by expanding e-commerce and increasing supply chain volumes. Efficient operations are crucial for staying competitive, making experienced managers essential for maintaining streamlined processes and timely dispatch. Employers are also seeking candidates proficient in advanced WMS systems and RFID technology, as businesses turn to tech-driven solutions for a competitive edge. Overall, the recruitment outlook is strong, particularly for managers who combine technical expertise with effective leadership and process optimisation skills.

Logistics Manager

Intermediate	\$120,000 - \$150,000
Advanced	\$150,000 - \$200,000
Regional	\$200,000+

The role of a Logistics Manager is set to remain critical through 2025, as businesses continue to balance cost pressures, technological change, and evolving customer expectations. While recruitment activity has been steady, demand is expected to rise with the expansion of e-commerce and increasing complexity in supply chains. Companies are seeking logistics leaders who can drive end-to-end efficiency, manage inventory effectively, and deliver on service across multiple channels. Expertise in automation, data analytics, and sustainability is becoming more important, with green logistics and reverse logistics now key priorities. Those with broad operational knowledge and strong technical capability will be highly sought after.

Transport Manager

Local	\$130,000 - \$150,000
Advanced	\$150,000 - \$200,000
Regional/National	\$200,000+

The demand for experienced Transport Managers in New Zealand is expected to rise through 2025, driven by the need for greater efficiency and resilience across supply chains. With a persistent shortage of senior-level transport professionals, businesses are prioritising candidates who can lead operational improvements and deliver measurable cost savings. As the role evolves, there's a growing focus on combining hands-on transport knowledge with strong systems and analytical skills. Optimising fuel usage, route planning, and fleet performance remain core priorities. Looking ahead, sustainability will become increasingly important, positioning Transport Managers with a green logistics mindset as key players in future-focused operations.

Fleet Manager

Small Fleet	\$130,000 - \$150,000
Medium Fleet	\$150,000 - \$180,000
Large Fleet & National Responsibility	\$180,000 - \$220,000+

Demand for Fleet Managers in New Zealand is expected to pick up modestly after a static period of hiring activity in 2023 – 2024, particularly in sectors reliant on heavy transport and construction. The role remains highly specialised, with companies increasingly valuing professionals who can manage fleet lifecycles, drive operational efficiency, and deliver measurable cost savings. There's a growing emphasis on technology adoption, sustainability, and integrated supply chain thinking. Hybrid roles that blend fleet, logistics, and procurement responsibilities are becoming more common. As transportation networks continue to face pressure and regulatory demands increase, experienced Fleet Managers with strategic and technical capability will remain in strong demand.

Inventory Manager

Inventory Administrator	\$65,000 - \$80,000
Inventory Controller	\$70,000 - \$90,000
Inventory Manager	\$90,000 - \$120,000

In 2025, demand for Inventory Managers in New Zealand has remained relatively low, with many businesses managing vacancies by reallocating responsibilities across existing teams and established inventory managers not looking to move. Stable inventory positions and efficiency gains in forecasting have supported leaner planning structures. However, hiring activity is expected to pick up in the second half of 2025 and into 2026, driven by inventory managers looking for new career moves, increased volumes and the need for improved planning accuracy and tighter control of stock levels. Growth will be gradual, but businesses will look to rebuild capability by hiring Inventory Planners with strong ERP proficiency, analytical skills, and end-to-end inventory management experience.

Customs Broker

Entry/Junior Customs Clerk working towards CBAFF UUI experience	\$60,000 - \$75,000
CBAFF UUI qualified Intermediate Customs Broker experience	\$75,000 - \$90,000
Senior Customs Broker experience	\$90,000 - \$120,000+

Customs Brokers remain in steady demand in New Zealand, given the country's reliance on international trade and the need to navigate increasingly complex regulatory environments. While the shipping industry has experienced a slowdown over the past year, Customs Brokers have remained essential to ensuring compliance and efficient cargo movement. Looking ahead to the second half of 2025 and 2026, demand is expected to pick up as global trade volumes rise and supply chain activity rebounds. With increased shipping movements, experienced Customs Brokers will be well-positioned to capitalise on new opportunities, particularly as businesses seek to strengthen compliance and streamline border processes.

Import Operator (Air & Sea)

Entry/Junior	\$55,000 - \$65,000
Intermediate	\$65,000 - \$75,000
Senior	\$75,000 - \$85,000

New Zealand's reliance on imported goods ensures that Import Operators remain a critical part of any freight forwarding operation. Responsible for managing inbound shipments with accuracy and efficiency, Import Operators play a vital role in maintaining smooth, compliant logistics flows. While recruitment has remained relatively static over the past year, we expect activity to pick up in the second half of 2025 and into 2026. As international trade volumes and supply chain transactions increase, the need for capable Import Operators will rise, particularly in businesses seeking to scale operations and maintain service reliability.

Customer Service Representative (International Freight Forwarding)

Junior	\$65,000 - \$75,000
Intermediate	\$75,000 - \$85,000
Senior	\$85,000 - \$100,000+

Labour shortages have challenged many sectors, and international freight forwarding has been no exception. As global freight markets stabilise following years of disruption, forwarders are sharpening their focus on efficiency, service quality, and cost control. Within this shift, demand for skilled Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) remains steady. These roles are critical to maintaining strong client relationships, managing time-sensitive and often complex freight movements, and ensuring a high standard of service. In a sector where service differentiates, experienced CSRs continue to be highly valued, especially those who thrive under pressure and understand the intricacies of global logistics. We expect the demand for experienced CSRs to increase significantly to cater for increased supply chain movements and volumes.

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Thanks from *our directors.*

At Hunter Campbell we're inspired by what we do. We're energised and empowered by the connections we make, and the lives we impact.

While this market insights document contains its fair share of figures, statistics and forecasts, it is people who form the heart of our business - our clients, our candidates, and our outstanding team of specialists.

Hunter Campbell is steadfast in our commitment to work with you to deliver best practice consultation, expert advice and valuable insight to help you and your business navigate these complexities.

We thank you for choosing Hunter Campbell as your specialist search and recruitment partner. Our team are here to help, and we encourage you to pick up the phone for a chat, whether about the current market, specific recruitment needs, defining a team structure or discussing any of the salary data included in this publication.

