

## Tapping the taxi talent

Recruiting overseas talent might seem like the perfect solution for your staffing requirements, but it might also be a recipe for blowing your remuneration budget for no real return.

Bringing in skilled workers from offshore is astronomically costly, both in recruiting and remuneration expectations. Often the reality of Auckland traffic or the South Island cold doesn't fit the preconceived notion of New Zealand they've seen in movies or tourism ads.

Offshore recruits who demand a comparable salary to their home country might also be moving to New Zealand for the wrong reasons. They will most likely end up being a short term visitor to the country.

But there is one talent pool which employers consistently overlook. It is the immigrants who are already in the country and probably working below their pay grade.

Everyone hears about the Russian brain surgeon driving a taxi or otherwise wasting their talent. Even the Department of Labour's own research suggests a large number of engineers are working for Auckland Co-op Taxis.

This is obviously a situation which cannot be allowed to continue given the current labour crisis. There is no benefit in encouraging skilled migrants to come to New Zealand if employers will not offer them relevant opportunities.

Many employers are openly prejudiced against workers without local experience. But immigrants in New Zealand who might be working outside their chosen profession already have local experience. They know what it's like to live here. They are aware of the cost of living and lifestyle. They are much less of a risk to your remuneration budget than someone from overseas.

Local immigrants are also likely to fit into your standard remuneration structure and won't be perceived as a tall poppy by colleagues the way an overseas recruit might.

Employers have tapped into the mature workforce and part-time workers. The next source of talent might literally be sitting right in front of you.