

4 reasons now is the time to look for a new job

Current market conditions are creating the perfect storm for job seekers. Talent is in high demand across a wide range of industries and employers are willing to work harder to meet your needs.

Now is the ideal time to look for your next job. Here are the four key drivers influencing the market - and some advice for how you can make the most of every opportunity.

1. 'Tis the season for job hunting

Job opportunities tend to spike in the first three months of the year. The market started on a high in 2022 with more than 35,000 new job ads posted on SEEK in January (seasonally adjusted). That's 42.1% more than the same time last year.

Rob Clark, Country Manager, SEEK, says businesses were quick to return to the search for talent in the new year.

"In January, roles in Auckland increased 10% month-on-month, Northland was up 11%, Canterbury increased 13%, Waikato grew 8%, and Wellington increased 4%."

Angela Cameron, CEO of [Consult Recruitment](#), says the timing coincides with businesses putting plans in place for the new year.

"Vacancies also tend to come up at this time, because people have been relaxing on holiday and that can prompt them to rethink their work life."

2. There are fewer candidates applying

Data from SEEK shows candidate applications per job are 45% lower than a year ago. Cameron says that a shortage of workers entering New Zealand from overseas has coincided with an increase in business activity as organisations reset their growth strategies after the shocks of the pandemic.

"With borders closed, there's been fewer people in the talent pool," she says. "As an example, when we had the first lockdown, a bunch of international tech contractors left the country, and we haven't been able to get them back on shore again. That's the case for most industries."

"The need for talent continues to increase," adds Cameron. "COVID has caused businesses to rethink their strategies around areas like sales and marketing, HR and leadership, in particular."

3. More choice and opportunity

The increasing demand for talent presents more opportunities for you to follow your ideal career path. If you've been thinking about changing industries, for instance, employers are [more open than ever to transferable skills](#).

"You may not tick all the boxes for a role, but if you can show adaptability and a willingness and ability to learn quickly, there are more opportunities for you," says Michelle Christie, Adelaide Director of Robert Walters. It's important to highlight these skills in your resume, cover letter, and during the interview process.

"Organisations are prioritising transferrable skills for hard-to-fill roles and they're being far more flexible in their candidate criteria," says Christie.

4. **The possibility of bigger pay packets, better perks**

The tough competition for talent is causing many organisations to lift their game when it comes to salary and work perks.

"The reality is that a lot of people are not going to move jobs unless it comes with a pay rise, and most employers know this," says Cameron.

Christie adds that there are now more opportunities for you to work in ways that suit you. "Some organisations are now willing to structure roles that can be completely remote and give candidates the choice to work from home or in the office, or a hybrid blend of both environments."

Cameron says that flexibility is on the rise, but she recommends that you clarify what this means for you in practice. "Does it mean hybrid work arrangements, for example, and is there a policy about flexibility? Is it culturally embedded in an organisation?"

How can you make the opportunities count?

Market trends may be stacked in your favour, but there's always competition for the top opportunities. So how can you make the most of the current conditions?

Cameron advises to start by refreshing your resume. "Write your resume in anticipation of who is going to be reading it," she says. "What does that person want to hear about? Employers are interested in transferable skills, so highlight the skills you have that are relevant to the role."

Another tip is to update your [SEEK professional profile](#) so employers can come to you. "Also, remember that employers can find you just by Googling you, so keep in mind the kind of content you post on all social media platforms," says Christie.

Christie also advises that you take a proactive approach – get ahead of the curve and start

applying now.

“Give organisations a call to stand out from the crowd,” she says. “Inquire about the role and show some interest in whether it’s right for you. It’s a candidate market right now, but you’re still facing competition, and taking a proactive approach can really help you to stand out.”

Cameron also advises that you talk to your current employer about opportunities to change roles internally.

“Think about whether the organisation you are currently working for is right for you and, if it is, can it offer new opportunities for you?” she says. “Speak to your manager and tell them that you are ready to step up or to move sideways. Don’t be surprised if there are opportunities within your current organisation that you might not be aware of.”

Trends are converging to drive the ideal candidate market, so now is the ideal time to start looking. Job ads are on the rise and employers are working harder to attract your attention. How will you make these opportunities count?

Source: SEEK Employment Report January 2022.