



**HOW-TO GUIDE**

# Restructure Checklist

A guide for New Zealand businesses:  
from preparation to implementation.

# Restructure Checklist

## 1. Preparing for the restructure

- Make sure the restructure is based on a genuine commercial imperative, e.g. a decrease in revenue, increasing costs, or a shift in the company's focus.
- Work out the ideal organisation or team structure and which roles need to or could be merged, disestablished, or have duties changed. Remember, the focus is on roles, not the people doing them.
- Do your financial homework so you can prove the reasoning is justified, including the objectives of the proposed change(s), why they can only be achieved by the proposed structural change(s), and the costs involved.
- Review employment agreement(s) and any relevant workplace policies, so you know your obligations.
- Assess the business risks and any potential issues – get advice, if need be.
- Assemble the proposal you'll give to team members, including the business case, information on the proposed structure, why you've chosen specific roles for changes, how the changes will roll out, new job descriptions, and any selection and assessment criteria or procedures.

## 2. Presenting the proposal

- Meet with all people who will be affected by the proposed restructure (if a team of people are affected by the proposal we recommend starting with a team meeting, then moving to individual consultation. This way everybody hears the news at the same time.)
- Outline the proposed restructure and give each person the proposal documentation.
- Spell out which roles are affected and how.
- Outline the consultation process. Remember, the restructure is not a done deal until you have got and considered employees' feedback. Encourage people to give thorough feedback and to come up with alternatives or new ideas.
- Discuss next steps and timeframes.
- Remind people of the support available during the process.
- Allow time for questions.
- Let the wider workforce know about the restructure, so they are aware of what is happening to their colleagues.

## 3. Getting feedback

- Give employees time to go through the information and prepare a response - we recommend starting with 2 working days, but it will depend on the scale and complexity of the changes. If people ask for more time, give it to them - as a rule of thumb, anything up to 2 weeks is considered reasonable.
- Offer a variety of feedback options, e.g. electronically, on paper, or in person.
- You should let people use work time to discuss the proposal and prepare feedback.
- Be prepared to meet with the union or other representatives if employees request it.

## 4. Making a decision

- Allow time to consider all the feedback received and weigh it up versus the merits of the original proposal.
- Prepare a decision document, including a feedback summary with reasoning why you will or won't use items of feedback (where applicable). Remember, you must make a "fair and reasonable decision" and be able to prove it.
- Present your decision to individual employees.
- If you have made significant changes to the original proposal that affect additional roles, then you'll need to allow more time for feedback on those changes.
- Present any options for redeployment or new roles, including selection and assessment criteria.
- Outline the implementation process and timeframes.

## 5. Implementation

- People whose roles are disestablished now enter consultation regarding potential redeployment or redundancy.
- Work through selection and hiring process for new roles.
- Support employees who are moving into new roles or have new responsibilities.
- Employees with no alternative options will be made redundant and will have a notice period to work out (or be paid out).
- Work to rebuild team culture by looking after people who remain with the business. The restructuring process is unsettling and staff may have lost people they consider friends.