

US

STORIES ABOUT THE
LIFE-CHANGING POWER
OF EMPLOYMENT



FOREWORD

If you have ever doubted the power you have through your job to make a difference in someone's life, the stories in this book might change your mind.

'Us' is about the transformative power of employment. The impact that both giving and receiving a first chance can have on lives. In this book, you'll read the inspiring stories of young people who have overcome challenging barriers to employment and the employers who gave them that chance.

The individuals featured in this book come from diverse backgrounds and have faced a range of obstacles, from navigating life in a new country, struggling with a lack of qualifications and work experience, through to socioeconomic challenges. But through the support of compassionate and forward-thinking employers, and our charity Talent RISE, they have not only found gainful employment but also a sense of purpose and belonging.

The positive impact of these experiences reaches far beyond the young individuals themselves. By hiring outside the 'bubble' and providing life-changing opportunities to those who face significant barriers to employment, the employers in this book have found a profound sense of purpose not only for themselves but also for their teams and organisations as a whole.

These stories serve as a testament to the importance of inclusive hiring practices and the need for businesses to recognise the potential of every individual, regardless of their background. They also offer hope and inspiration to young people facing similar challenges, showing them that with perseverance and the right support, anything is possible.

I am honored to have the opportunity to introduce you to these remarkable individuals and their life-changing employers. I have no doubt that their stories will leave a lasting impression on you, as they have on me.

So, whether you are a business owner, a hiring manager, or simply someone looking to make a difference, I encourage you to read on and discover the incredible impact that employment can have on the lives of others. If doing so makes you want to take action in your own workplace, please reach out to the team at Talent RISE via talentrise.org.



**KAREN
GRAHAM,**
ANZ CEO, TALENT RISE

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JAKOB WAITAI & SCOTT LAIRD

Scott was working to dispel the myth that a university degree is necessary in the media

industry. Jakob was looking for a career where he could put his analytical mind to the test. With one job opportunity, they're shaping the future of Media.

JAKOB WAITAI

PERFORMANCE COORDINATOR, GROUPM

Jakob is 20 years old and grew up on the north coast of NSW and now resides in Sydney, Australia. Jakob graduated high school in 2019 and worked a series of roles in labouring and manufacturing but always wanted to pursue a career where he could put his analytical mind, mathematical skills and strength in technology to the test. Jakob dreamt of working in IT, but after meeting with RISE, he realised his passion for media and is now building a meaningful career at GroupM as a Performance Coordinator. A highlight so far has been working on high-profile campaigns for clients such as Foxtel and Campari. Jakob is responsible for ensuring his advertising campaigns run smoothly and deliver on target results while leveraging his technical and creative abilities to optimise and enhance performance. With his dedication, hard work and his love for technology, he has quickly become an asset to the team at GroupM and is poised for a bright future in the Media/Advertising industry.



I've never had the opportunity to do something I know I'm good at - anything involving a computer and analytical thinking. So, I decided to make a huge move from Coffs Harbour to the big city of Sydney. I found myself working in furniture removal and although the environment was good and the people were fun to be around, I just wasn't happy. I struggled to wake up and go to work knowing it would be the same thing over and over again. I also felt as though

I was being treated too much like a child and if you know me, you know I consider myself emotionally and mentally older than my age. It was then that I made another change and moved into the manufacturing and production of 3D printers but sadly this turned out the same and I felt myself wanting more. I was looking for a job casually for about 3 months, applying for any job role that caught my eye. I stumbled upon a role that I thought nothing of and just clicked "apply". It was then that I was contacted by Saskia, a lovely employee of Talent RISE. She was amazing and made me feel as if we had known each other for a lot longer than we had.

Although I never used to answer phone calls where I didn't know the number or was not expecting a call, I felt an urge to answer the phone and I am so glad I did. Saskia greeted me with a warm hello and outlined the opportunities she could provide me and how she could help. She also asked me what I was most looking for in terms of a job. We talked this through and went back and forth about what type of job role would suit me. Saskia talked me through opportunities in the media industry and although I had no experience in it and little knowledge on what they do, I was immediately interested. I had initially applied for an Office Assistant role through Talent RISE, but after meeting with Saskia and joining the RISE Program, we soon realised I was much better suited for an upcoming job in digital media that GroupM was recruiting for.

We had a meeting the following week and after this, Saskia put me forward for the Launch Pad Program at GroupM and I was accepted into the assessment day. The process was smooth, quick, and very reassuring as I was always comfortable to ask Saskia whatever I needed to help prepare. She mentioned to me that all my peers will have recently graduated from university, whereas I had not been to university. This showed me how much trust Saskia had in me to perform the task required. She backed that up by providing me with interview preparation and we role-played possible questions that would most likely come up, which really made me feel confident. This was amazing to be a part of, and it was a little bit of a boast to my parents and friends that I was attending an event that was open to university students. The event went for a full day of activities, interviews and lunch inside GroupM's offices. I met some of my future peers and colleagues and made some nice connections that I still have.

At the end of the day, we had an interview with two managers from GroupM. They asked me many questions and I felt very confident when answering them. At the end of the interview they asked me one final question: "Would you be more interested in Social or Digital?", I knew this was my fate and picked the digital side. They must have liked me as I received a follow up interview with Head

of Programmatic Hannah Webb - my current boss. She was so nice and asked me follow up questions that just got me more excited to join the team. Two weeks later, an email arrived in my inbox indicating I had received a job offer from GroupM, for a full-time Performance Coordinator role.

“WHEN I WAS SENT MY LETTER OF OFFER, I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. I WAS A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER IN A GLOBAL COMPANY DOING SOMETHING THAT I KNEW I COULD EXCEL IN.

I was actually very nervous waiting to hear about the offer. I would contact Saskia regularly asking for reassurance and if I got the job or not. She let me know that I was in a really good position and the waiting game was a normal part of the process. When I was sent my letter of offer, I couldn't believe it. I was a part of something bigger in a global company doing


something that I knew I could excel in. I was ready to get thrown in and get to work.

It might sound weird coming from someone young, but learning new things is the most enjoyable part of my job. It is the first job in my career where I am happy to wake up and go to work every day. I love the people I work with, the technology I get to use and the environment I work in. Oh and not to mention it is a hybrid job so I have the flexibility to work from home 3 out of the 5 working days. Shoutout to my Manager Josh and Director Carmen. They have offered so much support and training in such little time and really recognise my achievements. I love the fact that they praise me when finishing something in such a quick time. I love the feeling of being in a professional company and having the opportunity to use a laptop and digital technology every day, and what would a media company be without mentioning the fun social events that we get invited to on a fortnightly basis. Chef's kiss, amazing.

To employers who are reluctant about hiring young people who might not have relevant experience, I would say think about the future. An employee has some natural skills - but they can be as good as their teacher helps them to be. In my experience, anyone can perform most tasks you give them, as long as you teach them and give them time to learn the processes involved. Practice, practice, practice. GroupM's Launch Pad is a great innovation as it brings young people with little experience into the company and

more experienced employees train and teach their peers. In terms of working, age is just a number... anyone can learn anything if enough time is offered to them. Young people provide many things an older person may not have, like different perspectives and adaptability. As a generation who has grown up with technology, we are naturally going to be more adaptable to technology.

To young people looking for opportunities, I would say don't give up! Don't let your limited experience get in the way. Don't think you aren't worthy enough because of the school you went to. You don't need to go to university to find a job, you just need someone to give you that chance and prove to them that you are the person they need. Look at me as an example - I've spent 80% of my working career doing labour work, wasting my time and body on a job that brought me nothing but a sore back. However, I don't look at it that way, I reminisce on the things I've learnt and the experiences I have been through and I then use those experiences to propel me into new opportunities. If you have a dream job, research that job role and look at the things you can do to help you get close to it. Be open to dream jobs you don't even know exist yet. If money is a problem, ask other people already in the industry for advice. Use the Internet, it's free and put your hand up for programs like Talent RISE who can help you with your next step. Last of all, be confident!



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SCOTT LAIRD

CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER, GROUPEM

Scott is the Chief People Officer at GroupM. In his role, Scott is a transformation specialist and is responsible for leading GroupM's AUNZ People strategy and the development of the internal people and culture proposition. Scott was a key driver in the development of the Media Federation of Australia's first ever united approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Outside of GroupM, Scott volunteers his time at Lifeline Australia as a telephone crisis supporter and brings his passion and support for mental health advocacy into all his work.



In a way, I've experienced both sides of the equation. Both the challenge and privilege. When I was starting out in my career, I didn't have a relevant university degree and was applying to countless jobs with no response. I was eventually fortunate enough to be given my first career opportunity through a connection of my family. The older I get, the more I realise the privilege I was afforded, and the importance of giving others a chance.

I have immense satisfaction working with Talent RISE. Seeing young people find their passion in a new career is really fulfilling. We've welcomed a number of incredibly talented and passionate young people who have helped dispel the myth that you need a university degree to get a foot in the door of the media industry. I want to create as many opportunities as possible and pathways for people with different experiences and qualifications to join our business and find a place they can thrive in the media and advertising industry.

As an organisation, we are very aligned to Talent RISE's vision "to change the lives of young people" by offering opportunities to gain independence and purpose through employment. GroupM's vision and purpose is to shape the next era of media, and make advertising work better for people. It all starts with our own people, and so we are designing our workforce to include people with diverse backgrounds, skill sets and perspectives. One of our goals is to be "Better for All", which means shaping our workforce to reflect the breadth of diversity of the Australian population.

We operate in an industry that has a relatively young workforce, but traditionally a lot of our new recruits come straight from university. Passionate and talented young people don't always follow that path and I want to make sure that we are attracting and welcoming young people through different opportunities and channels.

Jakob has been a delight to have at GroupM. He is very friendly, humble and personable and he's added to the culture of the team. He shows a natural curiosity to learn and confidence to take on new challenges, which means he's already a strong support on his client patch. He is a great team player and I've particularly noticed Jakob's confidence to lead discussions and ask questions which shows his natural leadership qualities coming out. This is very much in line with the career goals Jakob has expressed to mentor and train others. This drive is already valuable to our team and will be to people he works with in the future. We feel grateful to have Jakob in the team and are excited to work with him to develop his career aspirations.



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To employers who are interested in getting involved with Talent RISE, I would say be open-minded and remove any preconceived

biases that you may have about hiring individuals who don't match the traditional profile of your organisation. Your business will deliver better outcomes for your people and clients by having a more rounded workforce with diversity of experience and thought. It's also extremely rewarding to see the joy you can bring to a young person's life in setting them up on an exciting career path. Plus, Talent RISE is easy to work with and supportive throughout the process. Saskia is a fantastic partner for our business.

**“TO YOUNG PEOPLE
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To young people looking to take their first step on to the career ladder, it's okay to not have qualifications, there are other ways to learn. All the technical aspects of the job can be taught, but what can't be taught is your attitude - lean in, be proactive and engaged. Pay attention to the aspects of your role that light you up and that you really enjoy. Use it to inform how you prioritise which hard and soft skills you develop to push yourself in the right direction. It can be a good tool for your own satisfaction and success. My key advice for people starting out is to just start, don't worry about finding the perfect role or knowing what your career trajectory will look like. Ultimately, your experience will shape your career trajectory. Focus on how you can learn as much as possible and gain the most experience in the role you currently have, and that growth and experience will open new doors for you.



SUE SAMMUT & SOGHRA YARI

Soghra left Afghanistan hoping for a better life in Australia. Struggling to find work, she was introduced to Talent RISE. Sue has built her career from the ground up at Scentre Group and understands the value of supporting and developing the next generation. Together, they're thriving.

SOGHRA YARI

CONCIERGE,
SCENTRE GROUP

Soghra's life has been shaped by diverse cultures and experiences. She was born in Afghanistan but had to flee to Pakistan at a young age due to unfavorable circumstances. Soghra returned to Afghanistan to pursue a Bachelor of Literature degree at Kabul University and worked for a USAID project to empower women financially. Her experience in this project sparked an interest in business. Later, she reunited with her father in Australia, faced various challenges, but managed to build a supportive network. Her introduction to Talent RISE opened doors of opportunities, securing her a position as a concierge at Westfield Parramatta. This job allowed her to financially support her dream of studying Business. Soghra is proud to be part of such a dynamic organisation and has gained invaluable experience in business while interacting with people from diverse backgrounds.



I am Soghra from Afghanistan. I studied a Bachelor of Literature back home and had two years of work experience with Promote, a USAID project whose focus was on empowering women in the economy. I left my country hoping to have a better life in Australia, but it was not as easy as I thought.

I encountered many issues during settlement such as struggling to find jobs and finding ways to continue my studies. Due to

unfamiliarity, I started to redo the HSC at Bankstown Senior College. There, I found myself in a very supportive network that changed my story. I am so grateful for getting introduced to MYAN, who supported and informed me of the opportunities I could access through Talent RISE. Talent RISE provided me work-readiness support and helped me build my skills, and following this, encouraged me to apply for a vacancy at Scentre Group. I was

supported throughout the interview process, through to me accepting and starting my new position.

“ONE OF MY BEST MEMORIES DURING THE SETTLEMENT IS THE HEARTFELT AND CONSTANT SUPPORT I RECEIVED FROM SASKIA FROM TALENT RISE.”

One of my best memories during the settlement is the heartfelt and constant support I received from Saskia from Talent RISE. She walked me through the whole process of the application, from helping me understand the job

description to conducting a mock interview to helping me organise the required documents. Even after I started my job until now, she is constantly checking on me. I am so grateful to be surrounded by super supportive people.

I started working at the busiest time of the year (Christmas), which I initially thought would be intimidating. But working with an extremely supportive team, where I never hesitated to reach out for help, proved me wrong. I was mentored by my team members until I got confident to be by myself. I am so thankful to my supervisors and other team members whose support made my journey easy and memorable.

“AT THE TIME, I THOUGHT I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND A DECENT JOB BECAUSE OF ALL THE DISADVANTAGES SUCH AS LANGUAGE BARRIERS, NOT HAVING LOCAL EXPERIENCE AND AN ATTESTED QUALIFICATION.”

I was looking for work for one year before starting my role at Scentre Group. At the time, I thought I would never be able to find a decent job because of all the disadvantages such as language barriers, not

having local experience and an attested qualification. I applied for heaps of jobs via online job websites but never received a response. Then, I started to volunteer with Auburn Youth Centre to gain some local experience and at the same time worked in a local restaurant for extremely low pay. It was a very difficult time and a distressing experience because I felt that I had little power to change my circumstances.

When I was offered the position, it was hard for me to believe. I felt so blessed and excited. It even increased my sense of belonging to Australia. Just thinking about after Christmas was making me fearful of losing the team and job I loved. I really enjoy working with a team where we share, learn and support each other.

To employers who are reluctant to hire younger people without relevant experience, I would say, please trust in young people's potential and support them. This trust will change their whole life. In turn, they will bring their best selves to work. They just need an opportunity to showcase their talents.

To young people, never hesitate to reach out for help! Many beautiful people are out there to help us; believe in your strengths and keep going.

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SUE SAMMUT

SERVICES
SUPERVISOR
SCENTRE GROUP




Sue started with Scentre Group in May 2009 as a casual car park attendant. She has worked in many roles such as Administration Assistant, Car Park Supervisor, Concierge Supervisor across Hornsby and Parramatta centres and is now the Services Supervisor at Westfield Parramatta, in Sydney, Australia. Sue's favourite thing about working for Westfield is that no day is the same as the next. Sue loves working with people and leading the team through all that happens in a day in a centre like Parramatta. Development and training are also on top of Sue's favourite parts of her role, "there is nothing better than being able to promote our people from within. Seeing individuals thrive and grow in confidence within our industry and company is rewarding and part of why we love what we do."

I have always valued the perspective and energy young people bring to our organisation. Many permanent team members today once started their first jobs as casual team members in our Westfield destinations before going on to pursue a long-term career with Scentre Group. We're really proud of our focus on career progression.

To support us in building a diverse team that reflects the communities in which we operate our Westfield destinations, we partner with Talent RISE. Scentre Group has been a partner with Talent RISE since 2019. Each year, we recruit casual Christmas

Customer Services team members to scale up our ability to deliver extraordinary customer service during our busiest time of the year. Talent RISE began supporting us with this recruitment program in 2019 and has remained a source of talent into our business ever since.

Soghra works as part of the Services team in Westfield Parramatta which is one of our largest Westfield centres with over 24.3 million

 **SOGHRA IS AN ASSET TO OUR BUSINESS AND I'M INCREDIBLY PROUD OF HOW SHE CONTINUES TO BUILD HER SKILLS AND IS A VALUED MEMBER OF OUR TEAM.**

customer visits to the centre in 2022. Soghra's calm demeanour and methodical approach means she consistently provides extraordinary customer service in what can be a fast-paced environment where customers have high expectations. This has led to different areas of the Services team requesting Soghra to work with them. She has now trained with every part of our Services team from concierge to car park and valet. Soghra is an

asset to our business and I'm incredibly proud of how she continues to build her skills and is an important and valued member of our team.

Partnering with Talent RISE has enabled us to recruit talent from within our communities and in turn, support local employment. We have been able to identify and discover talent that may not have otherwise applied or been in contact with us due to the challenges and barriers they face in their day-to-day lives.

Recruiting diverse talent into our business enables us to build teams that are reflective of the local communities in which we operate and to better deliver on our purpose: creating extraordinary places, connecting and enriching communities. We value our partnership with Talent RISE and the positive impact it has supporting our focus on diverse talent recruitment.

My advice for young people with limited experience who are searching for work, is to be hungry, but humble. If you do the best job at the job you have right now, you will get noticed for other opportunities. All businesses are people businesses, so be curious and ask questions, listen and learn from those around you.



ELLA HARRIS & MICHAL SMYK

Ella dreamt of building a meaningful career beyond her small community. Michal understood the life-changing impact a job could have. Together, they're forging a brighter future.

ELLA HARRIS

ADMINISTRATOR, INSIGNIA FINANCIAL

Ella is 20 years old. She grew up in the mid-north coast of NSW and now resides in Sydney. Growing up in a small community allowed Ella to work in local family businesses in customer service roles during and after leaving school, but she wanted to pursue a dream of building a life and a meaningful career in Sydney. After engaging with Talent RISE and receiving work-readiness support, Ella secured a role with Talent RISE partner, Insignia Financial. A highlight so far has been learning a whole new skillset in a brand new field and also being able to work in a very collaborative team, working towards common goals together.



I became involved with Talent RISE through my case manager at SYC, who connected me to Talent RISE for job search support. When I moved to Sydney, money was a real challenge for me, and it was really stressful. I was also trying to find somewhere to live as well as job search. The competition was really high and I was always being told I needed more experience, even though I kept telling employers that I was willing to learn but was never given the chance. It became disheartening after a while and I thought that maybe I should just return to study instead.

Before Insignia Financial I was working in a cafe and looking for a

job for around 4 months. I needed a change but it was a challenge finding a role that could work with my personal needs. It was a pretty draining experience looking for a new job and trying to step onto a new career path. I'm just thankful for the support I had along the way. I was mostly looking for hospitality roles, not because I loved it but because I knew I had strengths there. I experienced quite a lot of rejection though, even once I did the interview I would immediately get rejected because I didn't have exactly what they were looking for. I kept thinking, maybe I should just move back home but I kept reminding myself that I moved to Sydney for educational, personal and career growth and that's something I've found now. Once I was offered the position, I really honestly felt so happy to know that I could finally start something new and give myself self-worth again, knowing I had a better chance with life.

Before I met with Talent RISE, I felt my strengths were in customer service and that's where I mostly felt confident, but Talent RISE really helped me with gaining skills and confidence when trying to enter a new field I had no experience in, especially when it came to interviews. Without this support, I would have had no idea what to say in an interview. The support made me feel like I was capable and could do it, so it was a comfort having Talent RISE there for me.

My journey after Talent RISE has been great. They have helped me reach a goal in life that I personally couldn't and now I feel like I can actually get back on my feet again. Gaining my job with Insignia Financial has given me financial stability and I can now live comfortably in a city without worrying. This job has given me so much confidence outside of hospitality and I'm surprised at how well I've done so far. I am proud of the work I've done, and I didn't think I'd be able to do it when I first started. I get regular feedback from my manager on my strengths and what I can improve on, and how they can help me get there which gives me more confidence. Sometimes I can doubt myself, but then I realise that I'm actually doing really well.

“THIS JOB HAS GIVEN ME SO MUCH CONFIDENCE... AND I'M SURPRISED AT HOW WELL I'VE DONE SO FAR...I DIDN'T THINK I'D BE ABLE TO DO IT WHEN I FIRST STARTED

Having Talent RISE support me throughout my placement has been very helpful too. It's just nice to know that they are there, and I'm supported, which is especially important if you don't have a big support network around you.

IT'S JUST NICE TO KNOW THAT THEY ARE THERE, AND I'M SUPPORTED, WHICH IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IF YOU DON'T HAVE A BIG SUPPORT NETWORK AROUND YOU.

With this role, honestly, I've just enjoyed learning something new and meeting people who are more like-minded. Learning new things for me is really important, so it all works perfectly. My team have always been very supportive and sweet to me. If I ever need help, they are always quick to help me. Our team is small but mighty, and we always support each other. I have created so many meaningful friendships

at work and we even spend time together outside of work which is so nice. My manager is also a mentor for me, and I appreciate it because I haven't always had a positive experience with managers. I really enjoy my 1:1 meetings with my manager too, they are really nice and it feels great to have someone who cares about my role and me as a person.

Insignia Financial provides me a lot of on-the-job training but we also do mini courses, which refreshes our memory and allows us to learn new skills. We focus a lot on on-the-job training and leveraging each other's skills. The flexibility has also been great for me, as it provides me with work-life balance. There is a lot of support when I do work from home and they provide me with everything I need, including all the technology I need for my job to be seamless. We also connect through Teams so we are in contact with each other throughout the day which is really nice.


I feel like hiring young people with limited experience is a great thing. It helps the youth of today feel like we have

more purpose and that no matter what our situation is, there will always be space for us in the working world. Young people can also add a new way of thinking to businesses that feel lost with ideas around targeting the audience of today. For example, I think that I have brought a younger way of thinking to Insignia Financial and ways to approach projects. We are doing mind mapping on tasks,

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which allows me to add my input on ways to improve and to use my experience and opinion to help the company grow.

For young people searching for opportunities, my advice would be to just push and go for it. It may seem scary at the beginning or difficult, but the main thing is you're giving it a go and as long as you have tried it, that's still something to be proud of. I have learnt so many things since I started my role, including that I am better at learning new things than I thought I was. This experience has reminded me to believe in myself more. School was a bit of a struggle for me, so I thought it would be a challenge in my life moving forward, but seeing that I can pick things up quickly has been a confidence boost for me. You can do this too!

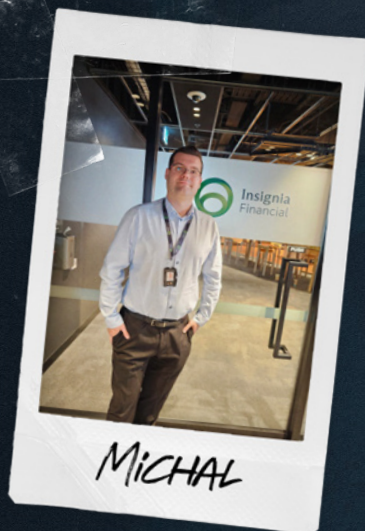


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MICHAL SMYK

TEAM LEADER,
INSIGNIA FINANCIAL

Michal is a Team Leader in Client and Technology (Operations) at Insignia Financial and has been there for more than five years. Michal is proud to work for a company that embraces change and wants to achieve financial stability for its members. His primary focus is people development. He mentors and coaches his team members, especially those in the younger generation, to progress their career paths. He believes it is always a rewarding experience to see someone succeed.



I think the majority of us take for granted the first role we landed to launch our career, and when we step back and take a look at things, it's hard to imagine how life would've played out if we struggled to get that first break – that's why I see being involved with Talent RISE as a very rewarding partnership.

Thankfully I work with some truly amazing individuals who, once I explained how Talent RISE works and what they stand for, were 100% on board with us becoming involved at Insignia Financial. Our company really cares about giving young people an opportunity, and it was a win-win for all. One of our very senior managers for the area that Ella was being considered for wanted to do the interview herself, and she was blown away by Ella's passion, commitment and attitude. It was a very easy decision she made to bring Ella on board.

At Insignia Financial, we truly value people from all walks of life. It makes our teams unique and human, which is what we are all about as an organisation. It was also great to have very senior managers fully supportive of partnering with Talent RISE. They too appreciate the benefits of having a diverse workforce, as we have a diverse range of customers too.

“WHEN WE STEP BACK AND TAKE A LOOK AT THINGS, IT’S HARD TO IMAGINE HOW LIFE WOULD’VE PLAYED OUT IF WE STRUGGLED TO GET THAT FIRST BREAK

Ella has made a positive impact and brings energy to the team. She has a strong work ethic and a care factor, and her creative skills have definitely improved our morning scrums. She is also the baby of the team, so everyone looks after her.

Since she has started with us, Ella has made strong progress in her personal development, she has grown as a person and developed new interpersonal skills. For someone who is an introvert, she did a 180 degree turn and is almost an extrovert. Work wise, she has mastered a few of our tasks already and is on the correct training path. At first she needed a bit more support, however she is now flying through the work. Provided she will continue getting the right guidance and coaching, she will go far in this company.

The support provided by Talent RISE to the young person and the organisation is amazing, very caring and genuine. The quality of the young people presented is of a very high standard, and it’s evident that they have gone through great interview training in order to make sure they are job ready. Also, I’d have to say it’s a rewarding experience when you’re able to extend an offer to a young person through Talent RISE. It’s a humbling experience and I don’t think we’ll ever understand exactly how much offering a young person who has been struggling to launch a career, the opportunity that they have been waiting and dreaming for.


To employers who are interested in getting involved with Talent RISE, I would say do it, what have you got to lose? It’s rewarding, humbling and life-changing for these young people to be offered a role that most of us were able to get easily, something we all took for granted at the time. The young people provided by Talent RISE are aligned with wanting to get into your industry, and the support provided by Talent RISE is fantastic.

However, while recruitment in the past has traditionally been a

'one size fits all' approach, you need to be able to change your style of interviewing, understanding and appreciating that some young people may not have had extensive experience in the past – so tailor your questions away from 'tell me about a time when' to 'what would you do in this situation?'.

To young people, I know it can be tough out there at the moment but be as patient as you can for the right role to come your way. When it comes around to an interview, be yourself, show that you have potential and you deserve to be given an opportunity, because you do – and you have a lot to offer an organisation. In the right role you'll shine and your career will go from strength to strength.

Oh and even if you're not a fan of voicemails, if you're looking for a career, set up a short, professional one ASAP – and make sure you have a positive phone manner when speaking with a potential employer. Good luck, remember you've got this.



I DON'T THINK WE'LL EVER UNDERSTAND EXACTLY HOW MUCH OFFERING A YOUNG PERSON WHO HAS BEEN STRUGGLING TO LAUNCH A CAREER, THE OPPORTUNITY THAT THEY HAVE BEEN WAITING AND DREAMING FOR.



ANTHONY LOGOLOGO & TRAVIS GULLIDGE

Anthony wanted to set himself up for success. Travis wanted to fulfil his recruitment strategy. Through Talent RISE, Travis soon realised that he was recruiting for more than his own gain.

ANTHONY LOGOLOGO

FREIGHT PROCESSOR,
NZ POST


Anthony was 21 years old when he was referred to Talent RISE by a valued community referral partner. He whakapapa to Ngati Raukawa and was living in Porirua with his parents and younger siblings where he attended Aotea College.



I come from a Pasifika/Maori background and became associated with Talent RISE through an advert from a previous Talent RISE programme graduate which got me intrigued, so I signed up to join the course.

I got so much support from the first day, even before the course started. The trainers and other classmates supported me and gave me confidence to join the workforce, improved my people skills and helped me to apply those skills to get into the workforce.

After completing the Talent RISE course, I spoke with a recruitment agency and through their connections associated with Talent RISE, particularly Travis Gullidge at NZ Post, I was placed at the NZ Post Porirua Operations Centre. I now work as part of the processing team where I sort freight to go to courier bays so they can be delivered quickly and efficiently.



***I WAS REALLY PROUD,
I STILL AM, OF HOW I
HAVE GONE THROUGH
THIS JOURNEY AND SET
MYSELF TO ACHIEVE
MORE IN MY FUTURE.***

When I was offered the position, I was really happy. My family used to work for NZ Post previously, so there was a little bit of history for me already. But I was really proud, I still am, of how I have gone through this journey and set myself to achieve more in my future.

The people I work with are awesome. Going into a new environment was difficult, but the team made me feel welcome straight away. Learning all the different streets has given me a broader understanding of the area I work in and it has now become 'muscle memory'. The training I have received has been amazing and the team have mentored me in many different ways, not just about work, but life.

To employers who may be hesitant about hiring young people who may not have relevant experience, give them a chance. They could be the best at what they do, but if they are not given the opportunity, how can they grow? They could be the best in their field, but no one will know unless they are given the opportunity to rise.

To young people, don't be afraid to put yourself out there and take risks, because you never know what opportunities will present themselves.

TRAVIS GULLIDGE

SERVICE DELIVERY
MANAGER, NZ POST

With over 20 years' experience within the Security industry, service within the Royal Australian Navy, and over 15 years' management experience, Travis takes pride in building and maintaining professional relationships and thinking 'outside the box' to improve businesses. Travis has a real passion for helping our youth build their confidence to start a career and support them through the challenges of setting and reaching their goals as well as providing them with tasks and opportunities to continuously improve themselves.



I initially got involved with Talent RISE for a recruitment strategy. I was introduced to Jessica Te Moananui from Talent RISE through a work colleague after hiring a student of hers (I did not know at the time he was part of the Talent RISE programme). But after attending the welcoming day, I could see that this was much more than recruiting for my own gain.

The students were scared, and unsure of what their futures held. By the time I spoke to the students 3 weeks later, they were a completely different group. They had confidence, they were willing to learn and best of all they were engaged and taking notes on how to get in the workforce. They were no longer scared, they were enthused.

When I attended again for the graduation day, the class was different again. They spoke differently, their demeanours were different, they dressed differently and they had a smile on their faces. They were proud, and ready to enter the workforce with the new skills they had learned. I am now a programme partner and I am proud to be part of such a wonderful programme for our young adults.

In terms of hiring young people with limited or no experience, I had no misconceptions. My employer was a little hesitant, but I explained that at some point, we were given the same opportunity as a young adult, so how could we deny that to someone else. I saw

“MY EMPLOYER WAS A LITTLE HESITANT, BUT I EXPLAINED THAT AT SOME POINT, WE WERE GIVEN THE SAME OPPORTUNITY AS A YOUNG ADULT, SO HOW COULD WE DENY THAT TO SOMEONE ELSE.

it as a great opportunity to not only provide a workplace opportunity, but to mentor and guide our young adults into a better version of themselves.

When bringing Anthony on board, he was a little shy and apprehensive at first, but in a short period of time, he has shown how reliable he is, how adaptable he is, and best of all how he has opened

up and is now a respected member of the team. When speaking to his Chargehand, you see a beaming smile when you mention his name. That alone shows the change the Talent RISE programme has made to one individual to impact others in a positive way.


Being involved as a programme partner with Talent RISE has made a life-changing impact on me personally. I'm seeing young adults transform in a short amount of time, I'm seeing the impact it has on the trainers, I'm seeing the positive impact it has in the workplace and I am as proud of the students as they are of themselves. Being involved with our future leaders and being able to further mentor them in other aspects of their life is a real privilege.

The positive impact these students have on employers is infectious. Anthony has definitely made a positive impact at the NZ Post Porirua Operations Centre and I have seen other students make a positive impact in their new roles.

The biggest benefit of being involved with Talent RISE is impacting our future workforce and future leaders. Being part of shaping their future and providing them the confidence to shape their own path is a real honour and I cannot thank the Talent RISE team enough for accepting me as a programme partner. It has not only provided the students with a new beginning, but it has also provided me with a passion that I didn't know I had. Engaging with our youth and building them up where society can shake them down.

To employers who may be considering getting involved with Talent RISE, DO IT! It will change your life. Be part of a team that creates positive change for our youth, it can change your business, it can change you.

To young people with limited experience who are searching for opportunities, the first step is always the hardest, so miss the first step and JUMP on to the career ladder. Take the positive step to open doors you didn't know were closed. There are many people wanting you to succeed and Talent RISE is the landing point for the JUMP to the career ladder. Meet with like-minded leaders in your community, take the opportunities presented and bring the real you. Don't be afraid to do things for free to gain valuable experience. Don't be afraid to ask for help. When the student is ready, the teacher will appear. Learn the "Simple 5" and put it into practice, watch your career grow.



**BE PART OF A TEAM
THAT CREATES POSITIVE
CHANGE FOR OUR YOUTH,
IT CAN CHANGE YOUR
BUSINESS, IT CAN
CHANGE YOU.**

"Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

Don't miss this opportunity.



LIDYA TESFATSION & LANA POLEON

Lidya moved to the UK from Eritrea and needed to build a new life from scratch. With a passion for business, she was determined to forge a path in this space. Lana wanted to provide young people with the opportunities they deserve, opening pathways within the Financial Services sector. Through Talent RISE, they were brought together.

LIDYA TESFATSION

JUNIOR CREDIT ADMINISTRATOR, JBR CAPITAL

Lidya is 18. She moved to the UK from Eritrea (near Ethiopia) a couple of years ago and essentially had to build a new life from scratch. Due to COVID, she was given the choice of delaying her GCSEs rather than trying to take them with only a couple of months to prepare. However, she didn't want to "waste a year" and pushed ahead, ultimately doing well in the process. Lidya was coming to the end of her second and final year studying Applied Science at college when she saw a paid internship with a car finance company called JBR Capital that Talent RISE was advertising via a community partner.



Lidya wants to go to university but needed to wait a year before being eligible for student finance due to her immigration status. She wanted to broaden her experience while waiting and thought the internship looked interesting. This was because Lidya has always been genuinely interested in business but didn't have the option of studying it when at school in Eritrea.

So, she applied for the role, which was in JBR's Credit team, and was successful in this. Talent RISE helped her with her CV and interview preparation as part of this process. She's done brilliantly since starting and JBR has subsequently extended her 2 month internship to a full year until she goes to university.

I come from Eritrea and back home, school was one of the main and best parts of my memories. I had some really helpful and passionate teachers growing up (also one of the reasons that made me love English as one of my favourite subjects). It was like my second home.

I came to England around COVID time which made it hard for me to experience what it really felt like (which I still have a hard time figuring out), but it definitely involved building my life from scratch - friends, school, and even getting myself familiar with the

different cultures of different people. It felt like I was lost in such a diverse world but luckily, I adapted to things quickly, which eased my mind.

IT FELT LIKE I WAS LOST IN SUCH A DIVERSE WORLD BUT LUCKILY, I ADAPTED TO THINGS QUICKLY, WHICH EASED MY MIND.

When I first saw the opportunity for the internship with JBR Capital on the internet, I was in the last few months of my second year of college. I didn't really think I had a chance to be

accepted to be honest, but I tried, and with the help of Talent RISE, I was able to join and even get the opportunity to continue working until I start university next year.

Surprisingly, I didn't even know what an internship was, until a few months before I applied. Once I read the post online, I did my research about it and I liked how it worked and how it's really helpful for young people like me to get a chance and experience what a job looks like. It helps you explore a side of you that you didn't know existed.

At first, I was very nervous and scared but once I got in touch with Andy from Talent RISE, I felt comfortable and confident to ask and answer questions. The support I got was beyond my expectation.

When I first contacted Talent RISE, I didn't really have a proper CV, but Andy helped with fixing it and giving it more life. I didn't expect that help from him as I was only assuming he was either going to tell me I got the

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opportunity or not. Then, when it was time for the interview, he made sure I was confident and ready to do it and even advised me of the dress code. That really made it easier for me.


As I didn't have any office job experience, I was nervous about the interview and got ready half an hour earlier, but Sean who interviewed me and who is now my manager, made me comfortable and overall allowed me to be myself.

Once I got the job, I felt speechless. I really wanted to work and get an experience of what a finance company looks like. I was getting check-in calls at least every week to see how things were going and what I was learning.

I've said this multiple times and I would love to say it again, and that is the collaboration and inclusion in JBR is one of the best things I've seen so far. Since day one I've felt welcome and most importantly, I felt at home. Every colleague that I have come in contact with has helped me understand the company in many different ways.

I would say everyone comes from nothing to something, and it would be really helpful if employers could consider young people with little experience as it helps us understand what job we may suit and what our future could look like. It helps us explore something in ourselves that we haven't seen yet.

To young people, I would say apply for any opportunity you find as it may be something you don't already know you're good at or maybe hadn't considered for your future career. I had never seen myself as an employee in a finance company as I didn't really know much about it, but now that I am in it, I wouldn't have it any other way. It really made me reconsider my future career and definitely made me fall in love with the job.



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LANA POLEON

HR MANAGER
JBR CAPITAL



Lana has over 8 years' experience in an administration function, with six of those years being in technology and 2 years working for the NHS. Lana wanted to pivot into a new industry and the opportunity to work in JBR's admin function was available. Very early on there was an opportunity within JBR's HR team to allow Lana to transfer her skills to a new career path, which has and continues to be supported by JBR's Learning & Development Programme. Lana now advocates for the L&D programme at JBR, as well as being a part of the ESG incentive scheme which is the foundation for the JBR and Talent RISE partnership.

The empowerment from learning a new skill or visiting a new area of the UK always brings excitement and is a one of the reasons Lana feels JBR is a great place offering great opportunities.

At JBR Capital, as part of our ESG commitment, we recognise the importance of encouraging and providing young people with a platform to gain experience in the Financial Services sector. Speaking with Andy Chaggar and hearing about the inspirational work his Talent RISE team undertake gave us additional motivation

to offer keen, driven, and talented individuals the opportunities they deserve.

Any misconceptions about Lidya's maturity or attitude were quickly allayed and we were positively surprised about the way she firstly understood and then embraced the opportunity. Aspects such as commuting and office etiquette were elements which Lidya hadn't experienced before, but it became very clear there was no need for JBR to have any concerns. In fact, our

experience of working with Lidya provides us with great confidence to engage with Talent RISE again in the future.

Lidya's work-ethic, dedication and ability has helped maintain our efficient and effective responses to client requests. In a fast-paced, demanding environment, Lidya has understood the need to act quickly but with accuracy. Additionally, she has made significant contributions to strategic projects that have been key to JBR's success.

Lidya's infectious personality has had a very positive impact on the team. Her contribution to our cultural events, her willingness to engage with her colleagues and her boundless energy quickly made her a popular part of JBR. Her knowledge and passion for perfumes from all around the world has also ensured a range of scents from across the globe filtering through the office.

Lidya's first-class attitude, tenacity and desire to learn has been inspiring for us all to see. She quickly picked up the role and was a pleasure to teach as she asked the right questions, demonstrating from the outset that she had the attributes to flourish in a Financial Services environment. She is determined to maximise the opportunity and has shown tremendous maturity to quickly understand the complexity of our business. Lidya's success led to an offer

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of a formal contract to extend her stay with us for a further 12 months. We could not be happier with the outcome.

The Talent RISE team has been incredibly supportive throughout this whole process and their support has provided us with great confidence. This internship programme was created by Andy Chaggar in consultation with JBR's HR department and much thought was invested to ensure successful delivery. There was a need to tailor the programme for Lidya to ensure that her existing interests and aspirations were appropriately mapped with the relevant department at JBR.

**MANY YOUNG PEOPLE
JUST NEED A CHANCE
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TALENT RISE INTERN
PROGRAM IS ONE STEP
TOWARDS THAT.**

I would definitely promote Talent RISE to other companies. Many young people without relevant experience just need a chance to show their value and promoting Talent RISE's intern programme is one step towards that. It's also incredibly helpful for our current colleagues to work alongside, train and be part of Lidya's development.

For young people, it's all about brilliant basics. Be on time, show a great attitude, listen, demonstrate curiosity and always be willing to learn. Everything else can be taught.



CORRINE & CHLOE PAYDON

Corrine was looking for a job for over a year. A step out of her comfort zone and connection with employer Chloe, opened up a brand new pathway.

CORRINE

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT, BRACE EDUCATION & TRAINING



Corrine is 22 years old and grew up in Sydney, NSW. Corrine held a number of casual positions before moving to Melbourne in 2022.

Corrine successfully completed a Certificate III in Business Administration in 2022 and had applied for many roles without success. She was referred to Talent RISE through a Transition to Work Provider and was eager to start a career in an administrative role. Corrine interviewed for an administrative role with BRACE Education & Training and started work with BRACE in September, 2022. She is an organised and dedicated Administrative Assistant with a proven track record of providing exceptional customer service in fast-paced environments. She offers keen attention to detail and strong decision-making skills to manage multiple, concurrent tasks and has a self-motivated work ethic to perform effectively in independent or team environments. Corrine loved her role with BRACE but due to the organisation downsizing, her position was made redundant after 3 months. With the strength of having 3 months' work experience as an administrative assistant on her resume, Corrine was able to secure another role and is much more confident about finding employment.

I decided to make the big move from Sydney to Melbourne as I acknowledged the situation I was in and my old city prevented me from living the life I wanted. Previously I only had two jobs in Sydney. That was five years at McDonald's, then I was unemployed for a long time. I then worked one year with a restaurant which closed down because of COVID.

I made the move to Melbourne to explore new job opportunities and to be with my partner. With the help of DES, Elaine helped me gain confidence and assisted me in getting my license and getting settled in Victoria and eventually introducing me to Lorette at Talent RISE.

Lorette helped me with her connections and understanding what pathway I was after for a job. She helped me with my confidence during interviews and put me forward for jobs that suited my values and needs. She introduced me to Kim and Chloe from BRACE via email and eventually that moved on to a Zoom interview and that interview gained me my current role.

**“MY OLD CITY
PREVENTED ME
FROM LIVING THE
LIFE I WANTED.”**

Talent RISE helped me with getting my confidence up in the interview process. During my first meeting with Lorette, she assisted me with interview questions and prepared me for the interview with her and Liam for the NDIA. We covered a lot of really important questions that interviewers would typically ask. I'm someone that has anxiety, so I have really struggled with those sorts of interview environments. It was great that they put questions together for me because I was over prepared if anything.

Prior to meeting Lorette, I was looking for a job for over a year. To describe the experience, it was very frustrating, and for a lot of people, applying for jobs consistently and getting knocked back is demoralising, especially having that last for over a year. I was applying for hospitality roles as I was convinced that was the only area I could be employed in - that was the only previous experience I'd had because of McDonald's. Once moving to Melbourne, I finished my Cert III in business in March, and then I settled down and

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tried to get my license. Then from there, I was applying for anything to do with my business Cert III, so a lot of it was admin.

When I was offered the position, I was thrilled and super excited for my new pathway that suited me.

I felt more secure in myself and in my life. When initially moving to Melbourne, it was a very huge decision but I knew it was going to be a good one.

I enjoy learning new things everyday and making connections with clients. Everything about it is learning. Even if it's something that I've done before, I still feel like I'm doing it in another way.

For employers who are hesitant about giving young people with little or no experience a chance, I would say give them a go! Not everyone will have experience but be that person willing to help and offer. For other young people, sometimes stepping out of your comfort zone is exactly what you need.

 **NOT EVERYONE WILL HAVE EXPERIENCE BUT BE THAT PERSON WILLING TO HELP AND OFFER FOR OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE, SOMETIMES STEPPING OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE IS EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED.**

CHLOE PAYDON

TRAINING
COORDINATOR,
BRACE EDUCATION &
TRAINING




Chloe is an experienced Training Coordinator who applies the knowledge and skills she has gained working in the education and training industry in Registered Training Organisations. While working in the Vocational Education and Training industry, she showcases her dedication, problem solving skills, initiative and hard-working demeanor in a team environment. She is especially passionate and committed to helping young people find their pathway into further education, training and employment opportunities. Chloe started her career with BRACE as a Trainee RTO Assistant in 2017, completing a Certificate III in Business Administration (Education) as part of her traineeship in 2019, was promoted to Vocational Coordinator in 2020 and became Training Coordinator in 2021. Chloe is currently completing a Certificate IV in Career Development and is excited about continuing to help and develop young people, especially disadvantaged young people, into their pathway into meaningful employment.

I was a Transition to Work participant when I was 18, during which I was able to gain a traineeship and full-time employment, and I've never left the industry. So when Lorette from Talent RISE was talking to me about the Talent RISE program, I liked that it had that similar

mentality of coaching. This is something that sits really close to my heart. It's one-on-one support. It's really about guiding an individual on where they want to go and how they get there. I worked with Lorette in two previous roles and know firsthand how committed she is in getting the best results for young people – especially those that are disadvantaged and disengaged. When she started with Talent RISE and told us about the program, we were very keen to be an employer of choice. Talent RISE are always talking about their candidates and where they're going next. I think it's really good to know that you're not just a number, you are really following that journey.

I see myself in Corrine. When I saw her and when we interviewed her, I wanted to hire her because I could see her drive. She was so passionate. She really wanted to get a job and she wasn't able to fit that remit at the time.



**I SEE MYSELF IN
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To be honest, when we took Corrine on, we were behind in our own admin processes. So in taking her on, some organisations might look at that and go, “we need to train her, it's going to take time, we've still got a backlog”. Whereas Corrine was able to jump in on day two. These young people are so well prepared by Talent RISE, that they can contribute immediately. She was able to go forth and if she wasn't comfortable with something, she'd ask. We all supported her. I know she was really supported by our other admin, Jazz, and they worked together closely. She was very shy, very nervous but she's come out of that and it's great to see. She just takes it on and I can't even explain it. It's something that you need to see. The growth in the last couple of months has been enormous. We're all really proud of her. She's always asking for more work, always going above and beyond.


Corrine brings enthusiasm, positivity and a keenness to learn that the team needed. An injection of youthfulness and a different lens has really helped us in our processes. She's one of our little successors.

Our organisation doesn't turn the door on anyone. If they don't have that experience, we'll train them. Corrine is really supported by our team. She's been able to pick up what she likes, what she doesn't like, and how she wants to progress in her career. That's all you can

really ask for.

It's really cool to see those youth that are really passionate, despite what's happened in their upbringing, they're just able to channel

that. I know Corrine also had a lot of mentoring from Lorette and her other employment consultant. I think for me, because I have been in that slot as well, I've seen my own growth and what these programs do. I appreciate the ongoing support as well. It's not just "we've placed you, see you later." It's "we've placed you, what else can we do?"



**OUR ORGANISATION
DOESN'T TURN THE
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TRAIN THEM.**

Talent RISE is now our 'go to' organisation when we have an entry level role. The candidates are very well prepared and are job ready. As importantly, Talent RISE ensures we are a good fit for the young person and the young person is a good fit for us. Corrine has been a really great addition to our team. Providing an opportunity for a young person who faces barriers to employment is an added bonus.

To employers, I would say get on board! You get a quality young person who may lack experience but does not lack drive, determination and a readiness to work.

The ongoing support and the mentoring are one big highlight. It's a journey, it's about really working with the young person and the employer and gathering feedback. Lorette is always touching base with us about how Corrine is going and if there is anything she needs to be made aware of. It's about building that personal relationship and being able to go back to the Talent RISE program and support the Talent RISE candidate if needed.

To young people, follow your dreams and accept help when it is offered. Get involved with Talent RISE who cares about you as an individual and will put you forward for roles and organisations that suit you. It's about taking that leap.



BRANDON HOLL & JOEL WILLIAMS

Start-up business owner Joel was looking for go-getters to build his team. Brandon was nearing the end of his university degree and wanted to take his first step onto the career ladder. Talent RISE brought them together.

BRANDON HOLL

GRAPHIC DESIGNER,
BET WITH JOEL

Brandon is a 22-year-old living in Adelaide, Australia. Brandon has always had a passion for design and sports. After completing high school, Brandon pursued a Bachelor of Media majoring in Graphic Design at the University of Adelaide, graduating in December 2021. Brandon found the opportunity to work with Joel at BWJ and Tip Titans through Talent RISE after graduating. Brandon has been working at Bet With Joel and Tip Titans over a year and is excited to continue using their skills to create visually striking designs that communicate effectively in the world of sports and sports betting.



I was nearing the end of my Bachelor of Media degree (majoring in Graphic Design) and came across Talent RISE online, which advertised an opportunity for a sports-betting focussed design internship. This interested me greatly as I have a passion for sport, as well as design.

Once I applied, Talent RISE got in touch with me and met with me first. We had a great conversation which led to an interview they put me forward for. Talent RISE were extremely helpful throughout the

whole process which I am very grateful for. I attended the interview and Talent RISE passed my details onto Joel, who then contacted me directly. I had a separate meeting with Joel and was offered the role shortly after.

I had just finished university in December and started to look for work straight away. Luckily, I found this role quickly, so I was not looking for very long. It took under a month, so I would say I was very lucky! My experience was extremely positive especially as Talent RISE were able to secure me an interview very shortly after meeting with them. The communication was always very clear, so I never had to worry about anything in this process.

It was a great feeling to be offered the position and I was just excited to get started in the role. I always wanted to work in the sporting/design field so this was a perfect fit for me. I felt very lucky that I got this opportunity straight out of university and was excited to learn. The main aspect of this role I have enjoyed the most is the creative freedom I have been given. I am encouraged to be creative and think outside the box. I also work with a great group of people.

For employers who may be hesitant about hiring young people straight out of university, we might not have lots of life and work experience, but we have 3-4 years of creative enthusiasm behind

us, and we just want to get an opportunity to put that into practice in the real world.



**IT WAS A GREAT
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STARTED IN THE ROLE.**

For young people, my advice would be just keep actively looking for roles and if you do see something, apply for it, even if you don't fulfill every single criterion. That first role will come up for you.

JOEL WILLIAMS

FOUNDER,
BET WITH JOEL

Joel is a South Australian entrepreneur, founder, and investor in multiple start-ups. Known most prominently for his company Bet With Joel, they have 1,000+ clients that advise on sports markets around the globe. Bet With Joel treats sports betting as an analytical, process-driven investment by finding value in daily sports markets. Joel has also recently founded global sports betting advisory company, Tip Titans. The platform utilises blockchain technology and looks to bring the best sports analysts and investors from around the globe to one place for bettors and aspiring investors looking to beat bookmakers. "My passion is creating things that challenge the status quo and positively impact the industry it plays in. You will find me involved in projects I'm passionate about and believe in".



I wanted to get involved with Talent RISE to provide an opportunity for a young person to thrive in a start-up business setting. We were building our team at the time, and I was introduced by another business owner. It was an opportunity for us to get somebody young who was keen to learn. Brandon fit the role so well, which was so pleasing. For Brandon to come in and be so keen to learn, it

was a breath of fresh air. We have a young team and we find that young people are energetic, motivated and thrive in an environment such as ours. We've found processes are taken up and learnt as efficiently as someone more experienced. To be honest, we had somebody senior who we hired in the months prior and they were less versatile. They were more stuck in their ways and Brandon was almost the opposite, so it was really pleasing to see.

Brandon has had an enormous impact on our team and to watch him grow over the past 12 months has been a pleasure. He continues to learn each day on the job, pushing himself with the application and learning of new skills. It's very rewarding to witness and we've seen a great benefit from that as a business.


Brandon's helped take our social media and our communications to another level. Previously, we'd have to go back and forth with external subcontractors, and it was really inefficient. So, to be able to sit with Brandon, bring branding in-house, work with him and get him across our brands, has increased efficiency and quality across everything we do from a design perspective.

Our experience with Talent RISE has been a pleasant surprise. The business is all about people and we've gained a fantastic team member through being involved with the team. In my interactions with Talent RISE, it was noticeable how caring they were. Talent RISE is about getting young people with limited or no experience

into work. They made that process really easy for us. They were also more than happy to screen and interview, meaning we were presented with the best candidates for the role, which was really important because we are always a little bit time poor. So that was really helpful and overall it was a really positive experience.

The team at Talent RISE were extremely helpful throughout the application process which softened the load on us. This was particularly helpful as a start-up business, as we don't have a hiring team or department to take care of this. You can see that Talent RISE cares about the people that they're seeking employment for.


When it came to the candidates put forward, there was quite a good spread to choose from, which was helpful. Talent RISE would also



**BRANDON HAS HAD
AN ENORMOUS IMPACT
ON OUR TEAM AND
TO WATCH HIM GROW
OVER THE PAST 12
MONTHS HAS BEEN A
PLEASURE.**

check in to see how things were going, which shows again, the level of care they had in making it work. So not only did they really care about the young person that was going into the role but also, us as a business and making sure that we were happy. If we were looking to hire a young person again, we would definitely reach out to Talent RISE.

To employers, don't hesitate, it's a great program and you will be supported by the Talent RISE team throughout the journey. It


**FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKING
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depends on the role each business is looking for, but in terms of finding entry-level talent, it is a great way to do it.

For young people looking for opportunities, I would say apply for all those roles that you would love to be in, you'd be

surprised how many businesses are looking for young, motivated people. You'll then find yourself in a long-term role that you will enjoy and there's nothing more valuable than that.



TAYLOR-ROSE LEALAI SALANOA & JESSICA TE MOANANUI

Taylor was worried her lack of work experience would block her from finding employment. Jessica has dedicated her life to connecting young people with meaningful job opportunities. Together, they are supporting even more young people on their career journeys, changing lives everyday.

TAYLOR-ROSE LEALAISALANOA

KAITIAKI / YOUTH PROGRAMME
MANAGER, TALENT
RISE

‘O a’u ‘o le Sāmoa, Māori, ma le Palagi. O lo’u tama o le Samoa e sau mai le nu’u o Fasito’otai ma Palauli. O lo’u tina o le Egelani ma le tagata nu’u Māori o le iwi o Ngāti Porou. / I am of Samoan, Maori and European descent. My father originates from the villages of Palauli and Fasito’otai in Samoa while my mother is of English and Maori descent; she is a descendant of the Ngati Porou tribe.

Taylor is 23 years of age and is of Samoan and Māori descent. She grew up in Porirua, a small town in Wellington, New Zealand, where she currently resides. Taylor completed her secondary school studies at Aotea College in 2017, and pursued further studies at Te Auaha Institute of Creativity, gaining her Bachelor of Creativity, majoring in Music in 2021. Since graduating from university, Taylor attended and graduated from the Talent RISE work-readiness programme in 2022, where she learnt the foundational skillsets centered around entering the workplace confidently. Since graduating the programme, Taylor has been working alongside Jess as the Kaitiaki at Talent RISE, where her primary role is to handle all the administrative tasks and ensure that all young people who come through the programme achieve the best outcome they can. With Taylor’s own experiences through the programme, she has been a great asset to the team in assisting the young people who come through the programme to navigate their own way to securing sustainable employment opportunities.



In late 2021, I had graduated from university after studying music full-time for 4 years – though I had a qualification, I found that the creative industry had no opportunities that would allow me the security I was looking for when stepping into the workforce. As I was a little bit older and had absolutely no work experience backing me after graduating, I was at a loss at how I could pursue any jobs at this point. I was lacking the foundations needed to enter any work opportunities, felt that my age would raise some red flags to potential employers and had absolutely no clue how I was going to work around what felt like an unavoidable roadblock.

The Talent RISE work-readiness programme was floated to me through a referral agency, who felt that Talent RISE was a good stepping stone for me to learn those key foundations as well as build upon the tools I needed to transition into the workforce. As soon as I'd met with Jess and we discussed my situation and how the programme would assist, I knew Talent RISE was something I wanted to be a part of.

Coming through the Talent RISE work-readiness programme was a pivotal moment for me in building my career. I'd come into the programme at a loss of what my next steps were, however, Jess and the kaitiaki team had opened a safe space for my peers and I to build the foundations we needed to establish a meaningful career for ourselves. The skills I'd learnt in that 5-week period are skills that I still utilise both in my professional and personal life. I firmly believe that Talent RISE was the starting point that I needed to get my feet firmly planted on the ground when establishing a career for myself. It had given me the exposure to other industries that were available and allowed me the opportunity to broaden my idea on the career pathways that were available outside of my already preconceived mindset. Since coming through Talent RISE, I have found that the confidence in my abilities has grown substantially and it's something that I'm grateful to have learnt through the programme. The Talent RISE team have been a constant pillar of support in my life since beginning work and I'm grateful for their guidance as I've established my place within the workforce.

After graduating from Talent RISE, I'd been looking for work for about 2 weeks before I was offered the opportunity to work alongside Jess. At that point in time, my determination to secure employment transpired into a renewed sense of confidence and an innate need to achieve the goals I'd set myself while on programme. So, I began submitting applications left, right, and center to get my CV out in the market as much as possible. This experience was both very thrilling and daunting for me, what with the prospect of hearing back from potential employers as well as the possibility of

securing my first job.

As soon as I received the phone call from Jess, I was beside myself with excitement. Attending Talent RISE for that 5-week period and gaining first-hand experience of the benefits it has for young people made the prospect of supporting more young people with their own journeys even more exciting. It was also a proud moment for me, that Jess had seen the potential in my abilities and felt I was an ideal candidate to carry out this rewarding work alongside her. I was and still am super chuffed about it!

I'm so grateful that I work with an awesome, like-minded, and passionate team who support each other in every aspect - that in itself has been one of my highlights since coming into this role. I've also enjoyed having the opportunity to build formidable relationships with the young people within our community and doing everything I can to support them while they seek out employment. I've learnt so much from working with the different people who come through Talent RISE and am grateful to have the opportunity to give them the mentorship and support that they are seeking. No two days are the same and I'm glad to be in a role that is constantly replenishing my knowledge on the workplace, as well as utilising those very skills within my everyday life.

There are so many talented young people with little or no relevant experience out in the community, with so much potential and perspective to offer within the workplace; sometimes, all they need is that one person to give them the space and opportunity to continue growing. You won't know of the positive impacts a young person can make in the workplace unless you give them that chance to show you. One young person could make all the difference you need to diversify and add perspective.

To young people, don't be afraid to take that leap – there are so many opportunities for you out there, it's a matter of just allowing yourself to take that chance and seeing for yourself. The scariest opportunity may very well be your greatest asset in time. You're capable of anything you set your mind to.

JESSICA TE MOANANUI

MANAGER, TALENT RISE

Jessica joined Talent RISE at the beginning of 2018, coinciding with its launch in Aotearoa. She was brought on board to breathe life into Talent RISE New Zealand, creating an accelerator programme that focuses on supporting rangatahi (youth) between the ages of 18-24 with a particular emphasis on working with Maori and Pacific Island youth. Being that she was once one of these rangatahi, she now leads by example by sending the elevator back down, empowering our rangatahi to feel that anything is possible once you set your mind to it.



It's in our DNA to connect young people with meaningful career opportunities in New Zealand.

Our NZ team are here to make an impact to the community through mentoring, social, life skills and work experience workshops as well as training and employment opportunities. Our kaupapa (purpose) is empowering rangatahi and one way we achieve this, is by delivering our employability skills strength-based readiness to work program – Rangatahi Mahere Whakapakari Mahi utilising Te Kotahitanga (Effective Teaching Profile). We create opportunities for our rangatahi to actively participate and engage in their learning to encourage positive youth development outcomes. Once our rangatahi have graduated our intensive 5 week work readiness programme, we feel our young people are much better prepared for the workplace.

Taylor brings a rangatahi/young person's way of thinking to the role,

as she is of the same target age and demographic of young people we look to empower, as she was a graduate of our work readiness programme. Because she has come through the programme and has transitioned into the business, she understands some of the challenges that our rangatahi face and brings this perspective into the way she facilitates our programme sessions and workshops. She is passionate about creating a welcoming environment for our young people to be empowered to succeed and take control of the future that lies ahead for them. Taylor is a real advocate for long term positive outcomes for rangatahi.

There's a misconception that young people are unmotivated and disconnected, mainly in part due to what people read in the media around high unemployment and crime rates across New Zealand. This is not the case at all, our young people are bursting with energy that needs to be channeled somewhere positive, where they can feel like they are making a difference and positively contributing to their communities which will have a flow on effect for their whānau/ families and future generations. They know that they are our future leaders/rangatira and are passionate about things that will affect their future generations, the global economic crisis, housing shortage in New Zealand and climate change and they are eager to create change in these areas.


**“YOUNG PEOPLE ARE
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Young people are always connected to tech to keep updated on the news or to get in touch with family and friends. With the use of new technology and innovative solutions in the workplace, companies may grow faster and create more efficiency in their work. Rangatahi

minds are always overflowing with creative and innovative ideas. Having a young person's perspective in your place of business is important because this allows the next generation of leaders/rangatira to gain experience and trust from senior management, team leads and mentors in the workplace. A modern workplace that welcomes innovation and creativity brings in more opportunities for growth and a wide range of new solutions to overcoming different challenges when looking at things through the lens of a young person/rangatahi. Hiring young people/rangatahi does not only bring fresh and new perspectives, but most of all, it allows you to invest into your youth – the future leaders/rangataira of your community, country, and the world.

You have the opportunity to make a real difference in a young person's life by offering them a work placement within your organisation which will be the building block of their career trajectory. A work-ready candidate who has been empowered to take control over one's identity, a young person who is hungry to show a prospective employer what they can do. You will get continued wrap-around support from Talent RISE with that young person. We are heavily invested in the success of our young people and their transition into employment, supporting both you, the employer and our Talent RISE graduate.

The Work Youth Alliance research confirms and we have seen this time and time again, that rangatahi have so much energy to contribute to their work, working towards the achievement of the company's goals. They are full of passion and enthusiasm, and young people/rangatahi are open to any challenge in the workplace. They are ready to say yes to anything as they see this as an important growth opportunity, letting them gain new skills and experience. Not to mention the opportunity to change a young person's/rangatahi life, empowering them through career development opportunities by offering them a foot in the door is a wonderful feeling, not only

 **OFFERING THEM A FOOT IN THE DOOR IS A WONDERFUL FEELING, NOT ONLY FOR YOURSELF BUT FOR YOUR ORGANISATION WITH THE REALISATION THAT YOU HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE IN A YOUNG PERSON'S LIFE.**

for yourself but for your organisation with the realisation that you have made a difference in a young person's life.

My one piece of advice to any rangatahi is that no matter where you start your career pathway, if you have the drive and determination, you can transition into any career possible. Any skills that you strengthen and build in your very first job, will better prepare you for future roles that lie ahead and that will assist with your career trajectory. Just say yes!



CARL CAIRNS & MARC PARKER- HUGHES

Carl had been searching for roles endlessly for over a year, in hopes of securing a meaningful job. Marc was keen to make a difference in young people's lives. Talent RISE and the Kickstart Scheme helped turn these goals into reality.

CARL CAIRNS

SYSTEMS SUPPORT
ANALYST, TALENT



Carl is 24 years old and comes from Oldham in Greater Manchester. After finishing school, he went to college to study plumbing, electrical installation and various building services before working as a warehouse operative at an auctioneers and a distribution company. He later became unemployed and COVID added more challenges to his job search until he was referred to Talent through Talent RISE's Kickstart program. Carl was interested in IT and had informal experience building his own gaming PCs using knowledge he'd learned from YouTube, but initially didn't think he'd get a job in this area. However, the Talent RISE team recognised his potential and appetite to learn, so supported him to apply and then interview. Everyone was delighted when he was offered the role. After starting, Carl soon proved himself to be an asset and while he did need support, his attitude and ability to learn meant that everyone was happy to help. By the time Carl's 6-month Kickstart contract ended in April 2022 no-one had any doubts about his value and he's been a permanent employee of the company ever since.

Before I joined Talent, I was unemployed. I was out of work for a long time. Over a year, I reckon. There weren't a lot of apprenticeships or anything around that time either. It was absolutely horrible. Before that, I was working in a warehouse. I was doing production line and picking, and driving a PPT truck.

When I was younger, I wanted to join the Army but then when growing up, I realised I didn't have the mentality to do that. Then I fancied being a chef which didn't work out because I did work

experience in a four-star restaurant and it was way too stressful. I went to college and did plumbing and from there I ended up doing the warehouse job. It was terrible.

The government recommended Talent RISE through the Jobcentre. When I was going up looking for work, we had a conversation about the grades I had (I didn't have any), and then they recommended Talent through the Kickstart scheme.

When I first had the chat with Andy and the Talent RISE team, I think I spoke to them twice and they did mock interviews with me. I hadn't been in a job interview for so long so he prepared me for it and provided feedback which was really helpful.

Coming into my interview, I felt so much better! I'm glad I had the mock interviews as I don't think I would have known where to start otherwise. I was definitely nervous during the interviews. Marc also set me an information task after my interview. Getting information from websites and seeing how they link with other websites with keywords and such. I got some wrong but got lots right as well.

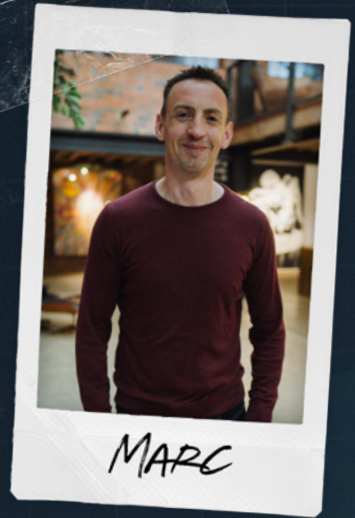
Once I was offered the position, I was buzzing and surprised as well. I have really enjoyed learning - it's a new background and workplace for me that I never thought I would be in. I'm learning something I enjoy, so it's been amazing so far. I've been building laptops, creating users on laptops, learning how to use Bullhorn and Daxtra and how to clear some of the data through that. Just in general, self-learning skills within the industry.

When you are young you aren't going to get experience if you aren't given a chance. I do notice that a lot of employers don't want to hire you without a set amount of experience. About 60-70% of people who want this experience in young people aren't employing them, so how are they supposed to get it?

For young people looking for opportunities, my advice would be to reach out to agencies, places like Talent RISE and schemes within the government. There are things you wouldn't know about that you can use to your advantage and to help you get a job. So use every resource that's out there.

MARC PARKER- HUGHES


NORTH ATLANTIC
TECHNOLOGY
OFFICER, TALENT



Marc is the North Atlantic Technology Officer (NATO) for Talent and joined the business just over 3 years ago, initially as ENGAGE and System Support Manager for the EMEA region. He originally studied Business Information Technology at The University of Manchester. His career has progressed from delivering recruitment services to high-profile accounts through to overseeing and managing operations globally. Marc's role at Talent is varied and includes ensuring that the company's tech stack and wider eco-system are fit for purpose and providing ROI. Talent's inclusiveness has always stood out to him, and he feels 100% comfortable being himself at work. So, when the opportunity to work with young people and Talent RISE arose, Marc was quick to take it. Marc engaged brilliantly in developing the Kickstart programme and invested time and effort through the whole process, right from shaping the role and the application and assessment process, to providing training and support.

Talent's 'Give a Damn' motto across the business is something close to my heart, so I wanted to be able to lend myself to Talent RISE. I wanted to help people get into the industries they wanted. It's a challenge also, which is fun. My background is varied and that gave me the opportunities to wear various guises and roles. You shouldn't just be able to secure a job because you have the experience, it should be about drive and passion as well. You should be allowed to prove yourself.

Talent RISE don't only guide employees, they also guide the employer and make you understand how to adapt and account for people who don't necessarily have a clear cut background or set of skills. They help narrow down what a candidate does have and doesn't have and the potential they have most importantly. The team works with you to look outside of the traditional box, making it easy to see how you can make a difference to people.



YOU SHOULDN'T JUST BE ABLE TO SECURE A JOB BECAUSE YOU HAVE THE EXPERIENCE, IT SHOULD BE ABOUT DRIVE AND PASSION AS WELL. YOU SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PROVE YOURSELF.

Carl is inquisitive and asks the right questions. He is a swift learner, you don't want someone who needs to be spoon-fed. He has the drive to want to learn. It's not all about teaching him to be technical, it's about finding someone you want to bring out of their shell. Carl admits himself that he can be shy, but despite this, Carl had great feedback after our first office night out. It was nice to see him integrating - he was networking, speaking to the management team, the senior consultants and everyone. They all felt he was gelling well.

Carl's future is in his hands, I can't control that future but I can guide him. What he does and what he works towards is all down to him. He can take the advice and complete the tasks and keep learning. I just hope that this experience, even outside of Talent with apprenticeships and companies, will provide him significant experience with a UK and EU presence and give him the experience to go to these opportunities confidently.

ABOUT RISE

Talent RISE is a charitable foundation which was founded in 2014.

Operating in Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, Talent RISE is committed to empowering young people and providing them with access to resources to build thriving, sustainable careers.

At Talent RISE, we provide pathways for young people to change their lives for the better. Too many young people between the ages of 16-25 are unemployed around the world. We want to make sure they hit their potential.

How do we do this? By providing education, training, life skills and opportunities to help youth who are experiencing barriers to employment, gain independence and purpose.

The RISE team have worked closely with potential employers to source job opportunities across the private and public sector.

We know that employment can change lives and give purpose, dignity and independence to a young person. A job is not just a job. A job is food, clothes, safe housing, connections, skills, self worth, mentors, identity, friendships, respect, community, security, opportunity, structure, experiences, purpose and future.

Our vision is to create purpose and life-changing opportunities for these young people.

If you want to help us on our mission and change a young life, get in touch at talentrise.org



US

**A JOB IS MORE THAN A JOB. IT CAN
BE LIFE-CHANGING AND ULTIMATELY
TRANSFORMATIVE.**

Us explores the meaningful connections between young people and the employers who gave them their first chance. From young people facing countless rejections to those hoping for their first opportunity when starting their life in a new country, you will discover the true stories of young people and the employers who have shaped their lives. Highlighting the transformative power of employment, Us demonstrates how one chance can make a lasting impact on someone's life.

#RISEUP



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