

Developing and placing talent within the industry

Ash Day, People and Capability Manager for Te Awanui Huka Pak.

Meet Ash Day! Ash is a respected professional within the kiwifruit industry in New Zealand, and next month will be her 3-year anniversary within the industry. She came to NZKGI from sunny Gisborne on the Tairāwhiti coast and has enjoyed exploring multiple roles during her time with the kiwifruit company. Her experience ranges from lab work to pack house responsibilities, and she currently works for Te Awanui Huka Pak as a People and Capability Manager. She focuses on the professional growth of individuals across the company, as well as fostering new talent and exposing them to the kiwifruit industry around the Bay of Plenty.



Ash loves the variety she's experienced so far, and when asked about her journey at Te Awanui Huka Pak, she said, *"I've held a few different roles, which just shows the opportunity for growth in this industry, and also the diversity. The roles that I've held are from lab to pack house, and now people and capability development."*

As the People and Capability Manager, Ash is responsible for overseeing the development and growth of the company's managing workforce. This includes managing recruitment, training and development, employee relations, and overall human resource management. Her ultimate goal is to ensure that the company has a skilled, motivated and engaged team, capable of meeting the challenges of the ever-changing kiwifruit industry.

One of the key areas that Ash focuses on is employee development. Being deeply involved in the industry herself, she is aware that it's constantly evolving, and that it's essential to have a workforce that is properly equipped with the latest knowledge and skills. To achieve this, she works closely with the management team to identify areas where training and development is needed, and then creates and implements programs that will help employees to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge.

No one day is the same at Te Awanui Huka Pak, and Ash prefers that about her role. She says, *"A typical day for me...my day changes. It can look like me going to careers and high school expos to promote the industry to rangatahi across the Bay of Plenty. It can look like creating internships and cadetship programmes to take across industry into different organisations, placing talented rangatahi into high level and meaningful positions as well as developing them through a cadetship programme."*

Ash's position involves general employee relations as well, and she helps to maintain a positive and productive working environment, where employees feel valued and respected. She works closely with the wider management team to address any issues or concerns that may come up, and to ensure that individuals are satisfied in their jobs.

Te Awanui Huka Pak is a collective of Māori whanau who have a shared investment in Seeka, a prominent kiwifruit company in New Zealand. Part of her personal mission and work is

promoting the interests of the industry and to ensure that the company remains at the forefront of developments in the sector.

On the topic of this exciting industry, Ash says, “I think what’s surprising about this industry is that kiwifruit is New Zealand’s largest horticultural export. This industry is multi billion dollars which is predicted to be 4.5 billion by 2049. The Bay of Plenty produces 80% of the kiwifruit for New Zealand, kiwifruit export. Māori grow 10% of that crop as well.”

Her passion for the industry, combined with her deep understanding of Māori culture and values, allows her to approach her work with a holistic perspective. In this way, Ash brings a unique perspective to her role at Te Awanui Huka Pak, where she is quickly becoming a leader in the kiwifruit industry.

Te Awanui Huka Pak Limited (Te Awanui) is a 100% Māori owned company founded in 1984 by a collection of Māori trusts. It currently has total investments in excess of \$20m consisting primarily of commercial property and shares in publicly listed Seeka Ltd.

Te Awanui’s vision is to see Māori at the leading edge of the Horticulture industry.

