



Some of our best companies tap-in to Auckland's international talent

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It is often that first break that leads to a meaningful and promising career for a new skilled immigrant, and some of New Zealand's best companies have started tapping in to the experience and international value-add they offer. Making that first break is not an easy accomplishment for a skilled immigrant. Read on to find out how three professionals found their 'big break' with some of the best companies in Auckland, and what the future holds for them.

Monisha Tharani

People Advisory Team, BNZ

In July 2009, OMEGA and BNZ, one of its funding partners, created an opportunity for a short-term HR Coordinator under the TAP-In initiative. BNZ needed a resource to perform certain additional HR duties and OMEGA had a database of skilled immigrants who were readily available, but it was Monisha Tharani who caught their eye.

Monisha, an HR professional with experience in recruiting for a multi-national company in India, had registered with OMEGA for both the Mentoring and TAP-In Programmes and was being mentored by a mentor from BNZ. Impressed with Monisha's skills and experience working in a fast-paced and high pressure HR environment, Monisha's mentor encouraged her to apply for the TAP-In role at BNZ.

With her mentor's guidance in the application and interview process, Monisha was successful in securing the job. Reflecting on working at BNZ, Monisha says, "The opportunity to put my skills to use at one of the best brands in the country helped to build my confidence and increased my understanding of the Kiwi work culture. It also gave me relevant New Zealand work experience, which is very important for immigrants like me."

Commenting on the value that Monisha brought to the role, Liz Frankland, Talent Acquisition Manager at BNZ, says, "Monisha joined BNZ on an internship programme

within the Talent Acquisition Team for a period of around three months. She assisted members of the team with recruitment requests and undertook some specific project work. She provided some valuable additional resource to the team during a particularly difficult time of increased workloads. She performed her duties professionally and did not hesitate to ask for help when required. Monisha received very positive feedback from the team, the wider HR team and key stakeholders within the business."

Soon after, Monisha's HR career took off when the TAP-In opportunity led to a six month contract role with BNZ's People Advisory team. The role involved addressing and managing HR-related queries from the staff at the bank and was a significant step into HR policy. Monisha's enthusiasm and hard work was noticed by her line manager and her contract was extended for another year.

Monisha feels she has been fortunate enough to avoid the struggles that most immigrants face in their job search and feels she has OMEGA and BNZ to thank for that. "While the mentoring helped me prepare myself for a career in New Zealand, TAP-In provided me with a real opportunity to apply my core skills as well as the learnings from my mentoring relationship. BNZ as an organisation has been hugely supportive, recognising my abilities and constantly providing me opportunities to broaden HR skills and move up in my career."

Marco Dela Pena

Recruitment Consultant for Vodafone

In August last year, OMEGA and Vodafone together identified an opportunity for a part-time, short-term role in recruitment at Vodafone that required a combination of HR skills and experience with talent management software. When OMEGA went through its database of skilled immigrants on the TAP-In Programme, the profile of Marco Dela Pena was a natural fit, with his strong experience in recruiting and knowledge of hiring platforms gained in the Philippines.

OMEGA presented Marco as a candidate for the position at Vodafone, where he was interviewed and offered the role. Marco was able to demonstrate that his experience with Taleo and Business Objects would enable him to quickly adapt to SnapHire, Vodafone's recruitment database platform. Marco lost no time fitting in with the team at Vodafone. He rapidly learnt the ropes of recruiting in the local market, performed his role efficiently and added a range of additional skills to his CV.

Soon after the project was over, Marco's line manager at Vodafone asked him to join the talent-sourcing team on a full time, contract basis, where his involvement would now extend to pre-screening candidates and other assessment duties.

Remarking on the benefits of this new hiring strategy, Fleur Braae, Talent Manager at Vodafone says, "Providing opportunities via the TAP-In Programme creates a real win-win partnership. We have enjoyed great skills and expertise as well as the added value that diversity of thinking and background offers. In turn, we have provided our interns with the New Zealand experience, how to build relationships and succeed in our environment."

Marco was very excited at continuing his work with Vodafone and says, "I was delighted at the idea of interviewing people again, because just a year back, I was on the other side, seriously searching for a job and waiting for that phone call..."

Though this role with Vodafone is for a fixed term, Marco has confidence in his abilities and feels that with the Vodafone 'brand' on his CV, his local experience, and the professional networks that he has built in his industry, the next great role is just around the corner.

Vodafone sees TAP-In as a great way to harness some of the best talent Auckland has to offer: "We look forward to welcoming further TAP-In participants to Vodafone and encourage other organisations to do the same and help us all to build our futures," says Fleur.

Allan Diaz

Strategic Marketing Specialist, Parker Hannifin NZ

"I've observed the temptation Kiwi businesses have for hiring what they perceive as the 'safe' option; excluding applicants that could offer a myriad of different experiences and perspectives," says Marnie Brannigan, Account Director at Rapport Advertising and Marketing.

Not so Rapport. When they required a market research contractor for a short-term role, they took a different approach: "Rapport is a growing business and we were in a tight spot last year and were in need of a contractor. As well as the traditional routes for finding a contractor, I contacted OMEGA. Within hours I had CVs and in just a couple of days we'd hired Allan Diaz."

With nine years of experience in strategic marketing and research in Singapore, Dubai and the Philippines, Allan had braced himself for a period of unemployment and a long haul job search when he immigrated to Auckland in August last year. He had heard that recruitment slowed down in the months before Christmas and that lack of New Zealand experience was an additional barrier.

But to his great surprise, just a few weeks after his arrival, he was interviewed by Rapport and successfully landed the role. His work involved planning and implementing phone and web-based research with health care organisations. Reflecting on the opportunity, Allan says, "It was fantastic doing the stuff that I loved, in a new country. It provided a refresher about the way work is done in New Zealand. And the team at

Rapport was great fun to work with; we went out for dinners often and had lively discussions. Even though I was there for a short time, I really felt like a part of the team."

Rapport's clients also had good things to say about Allan's work. His expertise and passion for research analysis and technical skills were widely appreciated and this was a huge boost for Allan. "Even though he was with us for only a few months, he took full advantage of the opportunity we provided and fit in very well. It really worked out for everyone." says Marnie.

When the contract was over, Allan started applying for other jobs, hoping to find something before the Christmas break. When he applied for the role at Parker Hannifin, Marnie was one of his references and the only local one on his CV. Allan feels this was extremely advantageous as his other references were overseas and not immediately available. Allan secured the role in late December and started in January.

Marnie comments, "I believe OMEGA plays a vital role in growing and enriching New Zealand's talent pool. I've been happy to be a part of that process as a mentor and as an employer. OMEGA's work helps immigrants market themselves in a way that limits the perceived risk for employers, making it work for the immigrant and the employer. From a personal perspective I've noticed the enthusiasm and commitment immigrants have and it's an invaluable resource for New Zealand."

Please note: The views expressed in these stories are not those of OMEGA unless specifically stated.