Companies that nurture your growth

Whether you're a recent graduate or you've been in the workforce for a while, taking a role with a company willing to groom you for greatness can be an excellent career move.

So how exactly should you go about finding a company that will be willing to *not only* groom you professionally, but also offer an excellent company culture and work/life balance?

Brainstorm prospects

First you need to compile a list of prospects. Start with a list of those companies you've heard good things about, or whose work you admire. You might include the biggest players in your industry. A company whose creative advertising campaign really resonated with you. A business that sponsors or supports a charity you care about. An innovative start-up you read great things about in a business magazine. A business whose products you can't live without.

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Research best places to work

Keep an open mind and listen to what the experts have to say. Check out which businesses have been ranked the Top 10 Best Places to Work in New Zealand by Randstad – there may be some fantastic companies included which you might not have already considered. For example, the Department of Conservation and Massey University ranked in the top five for 2013, thanks largely to those companies' focus on work/life balance, professional development, technical training and mentoring, philanthropy, and team building.

Search the web for other news stories relating to *great places to work, top New Zealand employers* and *professional development programs*, and see if any other interesting companies show up in those results.

Consider internships and apprenticeships

Internships can be a great indicator that a company has a proven interest in professional development and promoting from within. To find companies offering internships, search 'internship' on SEEK against your desired location and industry.

Companies such as BNZ and Shell are all known for offering internships and graduate programs, but there are plenty of other reputable businesses looking to groom future managers and CEOs via their own professional development plans.

An apprenticeship might also be an excellent way to join a thriving company, and be groomed to move up the ladder within their team. Apprenticeships have the added benefit of allowing you to earn while you learn, while gaining a valuable qualification and real-world experience. Check out the New Zealand Apprenticeships website to search for apprenticeships in the industry you are interested in.

Research and shortlist

By now you'll have a long list of prospects. Research those companies on your list to get a feel for their corporate values, their career and hiring processes, their employee benefits, and their company culture. Check out the careers section on their website, their business blog, their social media accounts, and see if their company name pops up in any recent online news items.