

# Get the experience you need for the job you want

Volunteering isn't just a great way to gain experience and skills. It offers credible work experience that adds plus points in your favour and a practical pathway when you're looking for a promotion or a new career.

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And enhancing your resume isn't the only career benefit. Volunteer experience can also show prospective employers your strength of character. It's an intangible attribute that could end up being the deciding factor between you and another person.

## Why volunteering is really credible

Just ask Wellingtonian Dave Adams. Adams, a youth worker at the Wellington Boys and Girls Institute, realised when he took a break to travel overseas that he wanted a change of direction in his career.

Adams went back to university part-time for two semesters and at the same time volunteered as a campaign manager for Volunteering New Zealand. That work experience got him over the line to land a communications role at New Zealand Trade and Enterprise.

Candidates such as Adams impress recruiters says Colin Mathieson, managing director at Alpha Recruitment. That's because

1. **It shows character.** "Volunteering gives us clues to the candidate's character," says Mathieson. "We know people prepared to put themselves out for others will generally work really well in a team. They are people who care about something and have a purpose." He adds that volunteers often buy into organisations' values and aren't just after the money.
2. **They are real skills.** When interviewing Mathieson and colleagues don't ask interviewees whether or not they were paid. "What we are trying to understand is what did they do," he says. "What was their understanding and how did that build through the work they were doing."

Mathieson adds that some degrees require students to do voluntary work and/or internships in order to graduate. "The reason why the schools make the students do that is so they can hit the

ground running,” he says.

## **Volunteering skills in hot demand**

There is a volunteer opportunity for everyone on [SEEK Volunteer](#). But don't just think about giving your time, says Scott Miller, chief executive of volunteering New Zealand. Not-for-profits and charities need all sorts of specialist skills.

For example treasurers are in hot demand thanks to the government's new reporting standards for charities. Volunteers with IT and web development skills are always in demand and can really contribute to an organisation through their technical skills and knowledge.

As charities become slicker and more professional HR and marketing skills are needed as well. And big picture thinkers who can sit on charity boards are always in demand, Miller says.

So, if you're looking for ways to give back and bolster your skills and your resume, check out [SEEK Volunteer](#) today to see the breadth of opportunities currently available in New Zealand.

*Source: Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK Volunteer April 2015*