

## **Media release**

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### **Pact Packaging NZ leads the way in workplace learning and development**

Pioneering manufacturing business Pact Packaging NZ has just been named 2025 Plastics Training Company of the Year, testament to its unrivalled commitment to learning and development.

Presented at the Plastics NZ annual conference in Auckland on Thursday, the award underscores the importance Pact Packaging NZ places on building skills, growing careers and future-proofing the industry. While investing in workforce development has long been a priority, last year they upped the ante, teaming up with work-based learning organisation Competenz to develop a unique training programme that would address the skills gap and foster career development.

The programme delivers Level 2, 3 and 4 NZ Certificates in Manufacturing to Pact employees, providing a vital stepping stone from unskilled labour to apprenticeships and career progression. The initiative has delivered impressive results, doubling the number of staff engaged in vocational training from 32 employees across six sites to 63 across ten sites.

“Our business has made a very purposeful decision to ensure gaps within industry are closed, particularly because our industry requires a good pipeline of talent and succession. Winning this award is a measure of success for all the work our team has done to get us here and is a verification that we are on the right track,” says Deanne Holdsworth, Pact Packaging NZ Executive General Manager.

“I’m extremely proud of the work our team has done to ensure the framework to be able to train has been put in place and that there’s active support. When you’re training, it’s not just about encouraging teams to train, you also have to have people around them to support. We really want to be an employer of choice and part of that is to ensure our teams feel really well supported with training, including succession planning and development pipelines. It’s part of our wider strategy.”

It’s a strategy that’s clearly paying off. By identifying training opportunities for each staff member and utilising vocational training to grow their skills, they are supporting employees with clear career pathways that strengthen engagement and retention. Deanne has been at Pact Packaging for over two decades, and is among the 40 percent of employees who have been with the business for more than ten years.

Roxanne Mason, Pact Group People & Culture Business Partner underscores the business’ training impact.

“Pact Packaging NZ has cultivated a culture that really values training and upskilling, which has not only enhanced our team’s capabilities but also significantly contributed to our overall success and engagement,” says. “Seeing our employees grow and excel in their roles is truly rewarding. Over time, our goal is that someone should be able to start out as a packer on a machine and have the opportunities and support to become the General Manager of Pact Packaging NZ one day.”

The Plastics Training Company of the Year award celebrates those who are at the vanguard of the training space, and while Pact Packaging NZ took out the top spot, Fisher & Paykel Healthcare also cemented its place as an industry front runner. Named the finalist in Training Company of the Year,

Fisher & Paykel Healthcare's plastics team leader Rajeneel Kumar won Plastics Apprentice of the Year and their plastics technician Bhupinder Singh was named a finalist.

Competenz training advisor Alan Smith says the triple accolade is testament to the emphasis the healthcare designer and manufacturer places on investing in its people, and the wide range of development opportunities available to staff, including NZQA certifications, Engel certifications and in-house training programmes.

"Fisher & Paykel Healthcare goes above and beyond to support learner success, allowing time during work hours for learners to complete their assignments, providing mentor support, and promoting cross-training across its different plants," explains Alan. "They've also introduced hands-on toolroom training to allow the internal plastics team to gain practical experience in the toolroom and they have an internal plastics training centre that features a state-of-the-art moulding machine and includes OEM-training subject matter experts to provide practical exposure to materials, machines and processing."

Andy Ryan, Site Operations Engineering Manager at Fisher & Paykel Healthcare says these innovations are just some of the many ways the business empowers its people to grow and thrive.

"At Fisher & Paykel Healthcare, we believe that our people are our strength. This is why we invest in our people through mentorship, structured training modules and practical exposure, helping them develop skills in a safe environment," says Andy.

"Continuous Improvement is embedded across Fisher & Paykel Healthcare, and while we don't do what we do for awards, the recognition as finalist in Training Company of the Year motivates us to continue mentoring our people and will surely encourage more of our people to further develop their skills."

While the training has returned results for both manufacturers, Alan believes the winners' success is more far reaching, and even altruistic.

"The training has provided big benefits for the learners, the business, the wider industry and national economy."

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