

The cost and value of carpentry apprenticeships to employers in Auckland and the wider NZ construction industry

ABSTRACT

The Auckland construction sector is currently faced with a skills shortage which has the potential to impede the industry's further development. This research focuses on the potential of carpentry apprenticeship programmes to assist with this shortage, and evaluates the cost benefit relationship of such apprenticeships within medium/large scale commercial construction companies in the Auckland construction sector, to determine the value to employers of this form of vocational training.

Interviews were conducted with senior management level staff of established construction companies within the Auckland sector, to explore employers' perceptions of the value of apprenticeship training to employers. In addition, a quantitative analysis of data provided by the participating companies was carried out, to identify the overall cost of an apprentice to the employer over the vocational training period.

Responses suggest growing concern within the industry about the skills shortage currently facing Auckland construction. Whilst the findings indicate an overall financial cost to employers during the four year training period, the respondents agreed that the practical benefits to the company and to the industry as a whole outweigh any financial implications. Apprenticeship training could mitigate future risk by focusing on developing the knowledge capital of apprentice carpenters within the industry.

Keywords: vocational training, apprenticeship, cost-benefit, work place learning, knowledge capital