



Weirdly + BUDDLE FINDLAY

Buddle Findlay finds the competitive edge with Weirdly

Total applicants

▼ **35%** from 2021

Total offered

▲ **56%** from 2021

NXS (cNPS) rating

8.7 ▲ **1.7** (goal rating: 7)

Diversity achieved

19% Maori **78% Women**



Buddle Findlay is one of New Zealand's top law firms. Each year they compete for the best new lawyers through their grad programme – a drive that results in hundreds of candidates applying for Summer Clerk positions.

The firm has been working with Weirdly to deliver this grad programme for over two years. This partnership was at first simply about managing the applications but quickly became a tool to help Buddle Findlay stand out in an incredibly tight candidate market. The results for the second grad programme are in, and our clients are beyond chuffed.

"It's a highly competitive industry," says Lily Bowman, Buddle Findlay Advisor, People and Culture.

"We want candidates to want to work for us by getting to know us and liking who we are.

“

Weirdly let us look beyond their CVs and get deeper insight. We've found some incredible people.

The grad-candidate journey

The goal was to give candidates an unexpectedly enjoyable experience, one that felt refreshing in a sea of CV submissions and long-winded personality tests.

Perhaps most importantly, the firm wanted to show how it – and its culture – were different.

“Law students are applying for so many jobs, and getting our culture across was important to us,” explains Lily.

Grads go through an engaging quiz and are invited to answer a free-text question. Built-in automation keeps candidates updated on their progress and then filters the hundreds of applications based on not just GPA but values alignment. The recruitment team uses this as a longlist, selecting a short list of candidates for hiring managers to work from.

“That process made it fast and easy to find people who align with our values. It’s also a more engaging and unique application process than traditional grad programmes.”

Talent Attraction Specialist, People and Culture at Buddle Findlay, Harrison De longh, adds that it wasn’t what people expected.

“Candidates feel that we’ve been authentic, and hopefully feel like they can be authentic too. It sets them up for success.”

Like last year, this approach delivered beyond expectation.

Almost too many to choose from

While the tight labour market reduced applications by 35% from last year, Buddle Findlay found enough exceptional talent to make offers to 39 candidates, a huge increase on last year’s 25. Harry got feedback from the hiring managers that there were almost too many to choose from.

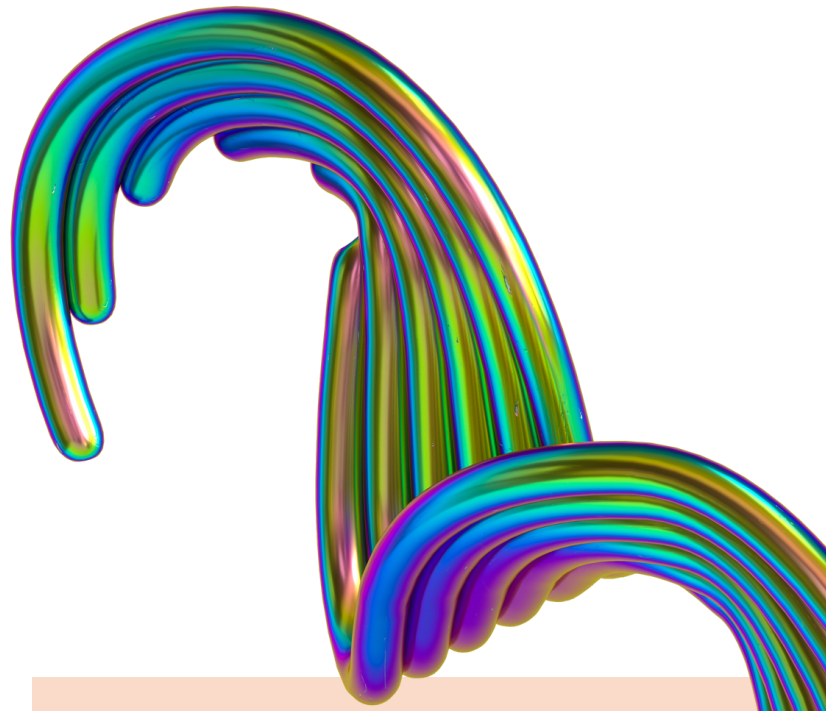
“They said the cohort we had to interview was some of the best talent they’d ever seen, and it was really hard to decide. We offered far more people this year, and even so, there were some really close calls.”

The firm secured 18 candidates for the grad programme and identified 91 high-potential candidates who weren’t eligible this year.

“That sets us up with a pipeline for recruitment in years to come. If there’s a specific vacancy, we have all their details and already know they align with our values,” explains Lily.

A bit of number-crunching supports this on-the-ground experience – successful candidates are correlated with higher attribute scores in Weirdly. This was most notable at the offer stage; where hiring managers were using Weirdly data to help reduce bias in their hiring decisions.

This reinforces what Harry and Lily already know – the Buddle Findlay Summer Clerk quiz helps the firm uncover exceptional talent.



Leading with values

Values-based longlisting isn’t common in law recruitment, and it’s something that delivers multiple benefits for Buddle Findlay. The differentiated criteria set meant the firm had the tools to find gems that others had missed.



Everyone hires off GPA, so you’re pulling from the same pool of candidates. We wanted to consider the person, not just the academics – that’s not the whole story

Harry De longh

Lily agrees – she knows that grades show only how a candidate was resourced to perform in an academic environment, not something that necessarily translates into an excellent team member.

“Often top grades speak to privilege – maybe they don’t have to hold down a job or look after siblings. With Weirdly, we can find the people who might not be at the top but got good grades despite those extra challenges. They bring attributes like motivation and resilience.”

Interview candidate:
Values alignment

81 average
score

Hired candidate:
Values alignment

87 average
score

Delivering on diversity goals

This beyond-academics approach meant the recruitment drive was inherently more inclusive, but built-in features gave the Buddle Findlay team full visibility and control to support their diversity goals.

"Diversity brings a competitive edge and strengthens and enriches our culture. That's more important than having a firm full of textbook lawyers," says Harry.



Weirdly gave us oversight over our diversity through each stage of the process. That let us be agile in how we progress at each stage and change tack to ensure we're meeting those goals.

"We're able to see that there are no biases, and we use the platform to make sure we're not letting them creep in along the way," adds Lily.

A post-campaign report confirms Lily's impression, with only insignificant differences in attribute scores between male and female candidates and between ethnicities.

"The team at Weirdly has been really good at helping us remove bias from the process," says Lily. "The quiz was seriously fine-tuned to be as inclusive as possible."

A top-shelf candidate experience

Candidate experience scores were again very positive this year, with an 8.7/10 against a goal of 7/10. Only 24 selected 6 or below.

Anecdotal feedback supported these scores, with candidates saying they loved the experience and appreciated that Buddle Findlay didn't ask them to jump through what felt like unreasonable hoops.

"We've really thought about how our processes impact the candidate, and we hear good things," Lily explains.

"Our firm is big on being a people's firm, and we're stoked that we can have that come through in the recruitment process."

Great campaigns need excellent support

As with any business endeavour, it's the relationships that can make the difference. Lily had particularly nice things to say about her Weirdly account manager.

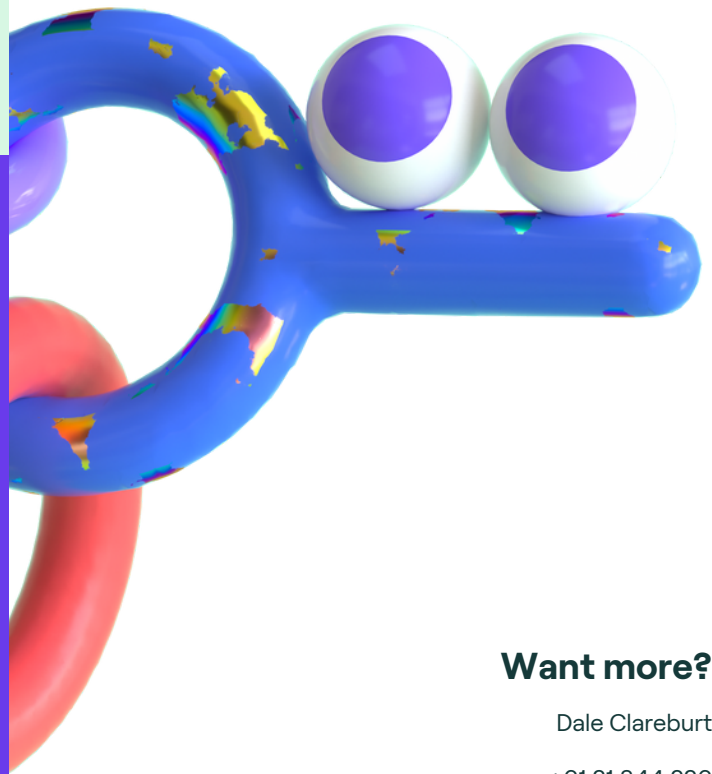
"She's wonderful: super enthusiastic and available. It was a great experience working with her. I was new to the role for this programme, and she was so willing to teach me."

Harry points to the value-add the Weirdly team offered – the icing on an already delicious cake.

"They bring a lot of useful and valuable insight into large-scale and grad recruitment that law firms won't have access to," adds Harry. "Those trends across industry and jurisdictions are so useful because they help us contextualise how we fit in."

Lily agrees.

"The Weirdly team is really great to work with, and the software is super easy and sleek. It enables us to do our job so much better."



Want more?

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