

Business Essential Briefs – October

(1) Business Technology Report 2021

A recent survey of businesses in the Asia-Pacific region has provided some useful information for SME business operators to contemplate for their own business. **The survey was completed by CPA Australia in May/June of 2021.**

Some of the key findings were: -

- The survey found that video conferencing and group collaboration tools, new payment technologies and cloud technology were the technologies that businesses were most likely to have used in the past 12 months.
- Improving operational efficiency and cost savings were the key reasons for using technology. Most respondents expect their business to invest in additional technology in the next 12 months.
- The survey findings demonstrate the strategic importance of organisations investing in and effectively using technology and enhancing their digital capability. Businesses that have been digitally transformed are better placed to deliver additional value to customers and handle future disruptions.

The key lessons for businesses from the survey are:

- Consider implementing a digital transformation strategy that aligns technology with your organisation's culture, employees, risks and business objectives.
- Consider using technology tools that increase productivity and reduce capital spending, such as cloud technology.
- Consider using technology tools that improve your understanding of clients' current and future needs, such as data analytics and visualisations software and business intelligence software.
- Enhance your in-house technology capability through training programs and securing top technology talent.
- Ensure that the technology and software you use has strong cybersecurity and data protection features.

For a copy of the full CPA report, please click on the link [HERE](#).

(2) Business Digital Transformation

'Digital transformation is the process of using digital technologies to create new, or modify existing, business processes, culture, and customer experiences to meet changing business and market requirements. This re-imagining of business in the digital age is digital transformation.'

Source: Salesforce

The potential benefits that can arise by embracing digital transformation in your business could include: -

- Reducing costs as a result of time savings in processes;
- Improving operational efficiency and productivity;
- Opening the door to new business opportunities and revenue streams;
- Increasing the speed of response to changes in demand in the market;
- Driving the culture of innovation;
- Preparing the business to anticipate any disruption;
- Empowering decision-making by deeper data analysis (Big Data).

A recent insight report on digital transformation was prepared by Icehouse New Zealand and the document can be accessed by clicking on the link [HERE](#).

(3) Casual Employees & Business – New Information Statement

As a consequence of the recent High Court decision in the case *WorkPac Pty Ltd v Rossato & Ors* [2021] HCA 23, the **Fair Work Ombudsman of Australia**, has now issued an important information statement on Casual Employment that **has application for all but small businesses** – defined as those that employ fewer than 15 employees. However, there are still opportunities for small business employees to apply under the conversion to permanent staff provisions that need to be considered by those business owners – please refer to the information statement for more details – refer to the link at the end of this article.

Definition of a Casual Employee

Following the passing of the Industrial Relations Omnibus Bill by the Federal Government, the meaning of 'casual employee' is now defined under section 15A of the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) (Act).

A person is considered a casual employee if: -

- *an offer of employment is made on the basis that the employer makes no firm advance commitment to continuing and indefinite work according to an agreed pattern of work; **and***
- *the person accepts the offer on that basis; **and***
- *the person is an employee as a result of that acceptance.*

For the purpose of determining whether the employer “**makes no firm advance commitment to continuing and indefinite work**” at the time an offer is made, regard can only be had to: -

- *whether the employer can elect to offer work (and whether the employee can elect to accept or reject that work); **and***
- *whether the employee works as required according to the needs of the employer; **and***
- *whether the employment is described as casual employment; **and***
- *whether the employee will be entitled to a casual loading or a specific rate of pay as a casual employee.*

The subsequent conduct of the parties has no bearing on whether a person is or is not a casual employee.

For a copy of the Casual Employment Information Statement issued by the Fair Work Ombudsman, please click on the link [HERE](#). The statement has effect from 28th September 2021 in relation to casual employees of employer organisations.

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