

To Whom It May Concern

Russell du Plessis

My professional relationship with Russell du Plessis started when, as a trustee of Zeal Education Trust, I assisted the CEO to fill the newly created role of National Finance Manager.

The position required someone who was experienced and senior enough to be able to firstly identify the necessary accounting systems and procedures for the four regional entities that were being merged into one but then also not be shy to roll his sleeves to get on with implementing them. The same person would be responsible for all the monthly processing, payroll and cash management functions as well. Added to this, the Zeal was in a state of flux; moving its administration from Wellington to Auckland, embracing the new cloud accounting options, promoting younger staff into roles with more responsibility, appointing new staff to meet growth requirements and committing to a \$1,2m capex spend in Hamilton.

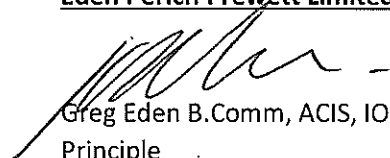
We were fortunate to find in Russell, someone who knew what had to be done and got on with the job without hesitation. He is clearly an experienced sole-charge accountant that was able to assess the particular needs of this growing organisation and implemented the necessary systems and procedures in an orderly and structured manner, while having to deal with the constraint of limited resources for back-office functions that is common to most charities.

Whilst ensuring that the day to day tasks were completed Russell was able to look to the future and put in place a staffing structure as well as budgeting and forecasting processes that will support the organisation as it implements its strategic initiatives.

The board of Zeal also took great comfort from the level of support that he provided to the CEO who was experiencing significant demands on his time and resources in this growth phase. The board also recognised that the reports he provided were tailored to the particular needs of Zeal and demonstrated Russell's insight and understanding of Zeal's finances. The board appreciated his commitment to building strong, positive relationships with young staff & volunteers as well as external stakeholders.

I have no reservation in recommending Russell as a committed, capable, hands-on accountant that can operate at many levels in an organisation. He is personable but tenacious and can be relied upon to deliver what he promises.

Eden Perich Prewett Limited



Greg Eden B.Comm, ACIS, IOD, ATAINZ, CPA NZ
Principle